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A SURVEY OF THEMATIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE
LEGEND OF THE WANDERING JEW IN LITERATURE

by

WILLARD FREDRIC BOWEN



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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies for acceptance, a thesis entitled A SURVEY OF THEMATIC INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LEGEND OF THE WANDERING JEW IN LITERATURE submitted by Willard. Fredric. Bowen. in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

In this study, the development of the Legend of the Wandering Jew into a literary theme is examined in light of a survey of literature in which reference to the legend occurs. An introductory chapter establishes the validity of this topic as a suitable thesis subject. The historical evolution of the legend from its existence as an oral legend, dependent on Biblical lore, to its emergence in literature as a structural motif is the second consideration of this thesis. The German Volksbuch of 1602 is of special interest as the source for ensuing thematic interpretations. In the third chapter the varying religious interpretations of the legend are summarized. The Wandering Jew depicts three religious motifs in literature: the Jew symbolizing the Christian significance of death as liberation; the Jew as a witness for Christ; and the death of the Jew symbolizing forgiveness of sin through repentance. The fourth chapter examines the emergence of the legend as a historical literary theme, due to the longevity of the Jew's mortal existence. The fifth chapter examines the development of the legend as an expression of anti-Semitism and the Wandering Jew's eventual evolution as a symbol of the Jewish race. Chapter six examines the legend's symbolic value of the romantic concept of Weltschmerz and follows the development of the Wandering Jew figure into a symbol of all humanity. The concluding chapter and remarks contain an indication of the legend's contemporary usefulness in light of the aforementioned thematic structures. The usefulness of the legend in literature is questioned unless

the Wandering Jew can become associated with a revolutionary concept of literary symbolism.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

"Ich will stehen und ruhen / du aber soll gehen."¹ With these words, taken from the German Volksbuch published in 1602, which popularized the Legend of the Wandering Jew, Christ cursed the Jewish shoemaker Ahasverus to a never-ending life of wandering. This amazing Jew became an extremely popular literary figure in western literature. His popularity is greatest in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century literatures of England and Germany.

Since its inception in literature, the Legend of the Wandering Jew has been used as a literary theme in a variety of interpretations. Although the legend has enjoyed periods of great popularity in literature, its usefulness as a motif is rarely recognized or understood today. The legend is presently in a popularity trough, partly because its literary essence was nearly exhausted by over-zealous nineteenth century authors, and partly because a majority of people are ignorant of its existence.

The object of this study is to survey the historical development of the Legend of the Wandering Jew as a literary theme from its earliest recorded beginning to the present time and to describe and interpret the four most significant functions of the legend as a literary subject. There will be no attempt at a completely comprehensive study of all treatments of the legend. However, a sufficient number of texts will

¹George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 249. --hereafter cited as Anderson, "The Wandering Jew."

be cited to illustrate uses of the legend as a literary theme.

The second chapter is devoted to a historical survey of the development of the legend. During the past year it has become apparent to me that the majority of people--laymen, students, and professional people alike--have absolutely no knowledge of the legend, hence the history.

Several studies concerning the Legend of the Wandering Jew in literature have appeared since the turn of the century. The earliest of these worthy of note is Ahasver-Dichtungen seit Goethe by Albert Soergel, a work which appeared in 1905. Soergel's study is a valuable source of information for ensuing treatments of the legend in literature. It is chiefly chronological in its arrangement, a pattern which was imitated by later authors. The apparent reason for a chronological study is to enable the reader to follow the development of the legend as a theme of varying significance in literature.

Soergel groups the literature influenced by the Wandering Jew theme into three periods: from its inception to 1800, from 1800 to 1870, and from 1870 to 1904. He develops the thematic usage of the legend in literature within each of these periods.

In 1928, Werner Zirus published Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, another valuable summary of literature developing the theme of the Wandering Jew. In Zirus' book, the arrangement is likewise chronological. He lists the most important works of English and German literature from 1228 to 1922 in which the figure of the Wandering Jew appears. Zirus, like Soergel, points out the varying interpretations of the Wandering Jew figure in

its chronological development.

Zirus interprets briefly the major works in their allusion to the Wandering Jew, but only chronologically. There is no attempt to group pieces of literature according to thematic interpretation. This type of arrangement allows the reader to observe the historical development of the Legend of the Wandering Jew as a literary theme, but necessitates an actual effort by the reader to interpret the legend's significance in literature.

The most valuable treatment of the legend to date is The Legend of the Wandering Jew by George K. Anderson, published in 1965. Anderson's book is the most definitive study on the legend yet to appear.

Anderson's work deals with an enormous amount of literature concerning the Wandering Jew. He does not confine himself to literary interpretations of the legend, but discusses the legend and its relationship to folk tales as well. The extent of his investigation and knowledge concerning the legend is most impressive.

Anderson's study is another example of a chronological rendering of the subject at hand. Beginning with a general discussion of the wandering theme and a historical sketch of the legend's origins, Anderson follows the historical development of the theme in chronological order up through contemporary twentieth century literature.

Anderson goes even a step further and discusses the legend's usage relative to various interpretations, but does not attempt to study the thematic development as such.

In attempting a study of this nature concerning a theme which has been interpreted from a chronological viewpoint, I have found it necess-

ary and useful to analyze the legend in a different manner. Instead of following the strictly historical development of the legend as a theme in literature, I have attempted to define the most important thematic interpretations of the legend in literature first, and then to discuss various works of literature within these interpretive groups. In other words, I attempt to clarify the legend's usefulness as a literary theme by defining its use and by giving examples to illustrate this usage. This type of study differs from the chronological studies of Soergel, Zirus, and Anderson in that the reader may understand more readily the literary value and interpretations attached to the legend and to confront examples of these interpretations. In my study it is not necessary to follow chronologically the development of the legend's thematic interpretation. Because the various thematic interpretations tend to overlap in the transitory periods from one interpretation to another, a chronological study of thematic development is often confusing. A thematic study, as arranged in this thesis, appears to me to be highly useful to those persons interested more in the legend's thematic interpretations than in its historical development.

The choice of literature in each chapter which is used to illustrate the various interpretations of the legend has not been arbitrary. In most instances, literature has been selected which would most clearly illustrate the legend's thematic usage. There has been no attempt to be comprehensive in these selections, a comprehensive study being necessary only to a chronological listing. In a few instances, however, the selection of appropriate pieces of literature has been hampered by availability of material. In these instances, I have selected works of

literature which aptly illustrate my point, but which are sometimes works of dubious literary quality.

This study is thus intended, and hopefully it will be successful, to result in a better understanding of the Legend of the Wandering Jew's value and significance in literature.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF THE LEGEND OF THE WANDERING JEW

Contributory Legends

The Legend of the Wandering Jew in its uncomplicated form is the tale of a Jew in Jerusalem who would not allow Christ to rest on his doorstep as He was carrying His cross to Calvary. When the Saviour paused to rest, this Jew commanded Him to keep going. Christ is supposed to have agreed to continue on His way, but to have cursed the man with eternal wandering until His return. Ensuing versions of the legend added varied and numerous details to this account, but the essential elements are here present. An attempt to trace this version of the legend to its verbal origin, when it was most likely originally circulated in oral tradition, is clearly impossible. Nevertheless, parallel legends, based on the Bible, appear to have molded the Wandering Jew legend into its most popular form as related above.

Two elements exist in the above version of the legend which must be emphasized, since they are reminiscent of two similar legends based on the New Testament. The curse of unending mortal existence until Christ should come again infers a waiting period, during which time the accused must do the will of the Saviour. The rudeness shown Christ and the consequential suffering meted out as punishment is also noteworthy. These two motifs can be construed as the beginnings of the legend.¹

The two legends described herewith continue to exist independ-

¹George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew (Providence, 1965), p. 11. --hereafter cited as Anderson, The Legend.

ently of the Legend of the Wandering Jew. They are the legend of St. John, which emphasizes life without death in the service of Christ, and the legend of Malchus, which develops the motif of punishment imposed upon a person as a result of his rudeness towards Christ.¹

The legend of Malchus originated from the Gospel of John. The reference is to the events which transpired in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before the Crucifixion of Christ. Judas, the apostle, had led a group of men to the spot in order to betray Jesus. After identifying Himself as the person they were seeking, Jesus told them to allow His disciples to leave. Peter, however, drew his sword "...and smote the high priest's servant, and cut off his right ear. The servant's name was Malchus." (John 18:10).²

Additional material for the so-called Malchean Legend is found later in the same book of the New Testament. Christ was brought before the high priest and was questioned concerning His teachings. Christ instructed the high priest to question His followers in order to find answers to his questions. An officer of the guard standing near Jesus "...struck Jesus with the palm of his hand, saying, Answerest thou the high priest so?" (John 18:20-22). Whether or not this guard was the same person, i.e. Malchus, who had his ear cut off in the garden is impossible to tell from the Scriptures, but according to the legend he was henceforth to be called Malchus. The salient feature of this passage is

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 11.

²In the corresponding accounts of this incident in the other Gospels (Matt. 26:51, Mark 14:47, and Luke 22:50-51) Malchus is not mentioned by name, but only as a member of the intruding group of men.

the rudeness in the form of physical violence with which the guard confronted Christ.

When the oral legend of Malchus eventually became popular is indiscernable, but it became a "tale of punishment visited upon the offender of Christ."¹ Varying versions of this tale have been identified in pre-medieval history and though details of the actual events are different, the tales are obvious versions of suffering meted out to offenders of the Saviour.²

The other legend which very probably contributed to the origin of the Legend of the Wandering Jew was the legend of St. John. In the Gospel of Matthew, Christ is quoted as saying: "Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom." (Matt. 16:28). Disregarding the various theological interpretations of this passage, the inference of continuing mortal existence, at least until Christ's Second Coming, is obvious.

A relevant supplement to the above passage is found in the Gospel of John. After Christ's Resurrection He had appeared to His disciples at the Sea of Tiberias. After John had recognized Him and they had eaten, Christ asked them all to follow Him. Peter, being curious, indicated John and asked what was to become of him. Jesus, apparently rebuking Peter for his curiosity, is quoted as saying: "If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me." (John 21:

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 12.

²Gertrude Jobes, Dictionary of Mythology, Folklore, and Symbols (New York, 1961), pp. 367-369.

20-22). The following verse points out that the clause preceded by "if" was strictly conjecture by Christ, useful in this snub of Peter, but the legend grew nevertheless from these verses that John would not die a natural death until the Second Coming of Christ. What in fact happened to the apostle John after the death of Christ is only speculation. The Biblical account is not specific. The suppositions concerning his life after the Resurrection of Christ and his demise or continued existence are varied and many. Whenever inconsistencies exist in the history of any famous person's life or death, rumors, or more specifically, legends are the natural result.¹ When and where the legend of St. John originated verbally is difficult to guess, but the early existence of the legend is clearly acknowledged.²

That these two legends, which owed their origin to Scripture and which probably originated in the Near East, were roots of the Legend of the Wandering Jew is fairly certain. Just how the legends were associated with one another is difficult to ascertain. It can be assumed therefore that oral tradition somehow bound these early legends together in a slightly different framework and the Wandering Jew legend as it appeared several hundred years later in Italy was the result.

The existence prior to this time of other legends concerning immortal and wandering figures cannot be completely ignored, even in a resumé of as cursory a history as this one.

¹One need only to consider modern examples of legend surrounding famous person's deaths to understand this tendency, e.g., Adolf Hitler, John F. Kennedy, etc.

²Anderson, The Legend, p. 15.

Cain, the son of Adam who killed his brother and introduced death into the world, was the first "Wandering Jew."¹ After killing his brother, he was cursed as "a fugitive and a vagabond..." (Gen. 4:9-15). The mark which was put on him in order that no one would kill him, and the land of Nod, which means "flight", to which he wandered, were sufficient ingredients for the first eternal wanderer myth.²

Other Old Testament characters such as Samiri, the builder of the golden calf,³ and Elijah, who went up into heaven in a whirlwind with a chariot and horses of fire (II Kings 2:11), were also blessed or cursed with eternal wandering.⁴

Other legends in other lands and influenced by other religions also contained parallel circumstances to those influencing the Legend of the Wandering Jew. There was an Oriental legend concerning Buddha and a disciple, Pindola, which developed the theme of immortality as a punishment.⁵ A Persian legend concerning the Iranian King Yima also dealt with never-ending life.⁶

¹Moncure D. Conway, The Wandering Jew (New York, 1881), p. 43.

²Conway, p. 43.

³The construction of the golden calf in the Old Testament was ascribed to Aaron. Three thousand men were killed on account of the idol. Aaron was forgiven. (Exodus 32:19-29). Semitic folk-lore attributes the construction of the calf to one Al Sameri. This man would have been killed, but was instead banished to a life of wandering. For more information see Conway, pp. 46-49.

⁴Conway, pp. 46-50.

⁵Eino Railo, The Haunted Castle (London, 1927; reprint New York, 1964), p. 192.

⁶Conway, p. 38.

Other mythological figures which appear in literature as wanderers are the Flying Dutchman, the Wild Huntsman, and Tannhäuser.¹

This short interlude illustrating the existence of parallel legends concerned with the idea of life without death should establish the Legend of the Wandering Jew as a new slant on an old motif. Nevertheless, more than any other of the above mentioned legends, the Wandering Jew legend developed into an important literary vehicle for the expression of various ideas.

Latin Chronicles

The Legend of the Wandering Jew in its modern form owes its existence to the merging of the Christian legends of Malchus and St. John and the influence of legends of eternal wanderers which filtered into Europe from the East. It is interesting to note that the first written accounts of the legend appeared in Italy--the natural port of entry for information from the East.²

The first written account of the legend (in its modern accounting) is in a Latin chronicle, Ignoti Monachi Cisterciensis S. Mariae de Ferraria Chronica et Ryccardi de Sancto Germano Chronica priora. The chronicle is recorded under the year 1223, the following being George Anderson's translation of the Latin original:

In that same year, when Frederick II was visiting the Pope Honorius III and met in the monastery of Ferraria with King John of

¹Conway, p. 51.

²Anderson, The Legend, p. 17.

Jerusalem, the Bishop of Tarento, and other noblemen, there came some pilgrims from adjacent regions on the other side of the mountains [ex ultramontanis partibus] and told the abbot and the brothers of this place that they had seen a certain Jew in Armenia, who had been present at the Passion of the Lord and, as He was going to His martyrdom, drove Him along wickedly with these words: "Go, go, thou tempter and seducer, to receive what you have earned." The Lord is said to have answered him: "I go, and you will await me till I come again." This Jew is said, every hundred years, to be made young to the age of thirty, and he cannot die until the Lord returns.¹

It was approximately five years later that the Wandering Jew made his original appearance in English record. He had not yet assumed the art-literary form as we know it, but was included in a Latin chronicle of 1228, written by the English chronicler of St. Albans, Roger of Wendover (+1236). It appeared as a report of actual incidence in his Flores Historiarum and was most likely an entry put in at his own discretion.² It tells of the visit of a certain unnamed Armenian archbishop to St. Albans, and of his response to a question concerning the reported existence of a wanderer who claimed to have lived since the time of Christ. The archbishop is reputed to have known this legendary man well and relates the tale of his persecution of Christ and his punishment. The offender, according to the archbishop, was called Cartaphilus,³ and after Christ's Resurrection was baptized a

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 18. This chronicle was edited in Naples in 1888 by August Ganderzi. For more information and the Latin text see Leonard Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte der Sage vom ewigen Juden," Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde, XXII (1912), 37. --hereafter cited as Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte."

²George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 239.

³The name Cartaphilus hints directly at the source of the St. John legend, for the name itself denotes "greatly beloved," a direct allusion to the apostle John. See Railo, p. 193.

Christian, whereupon he took upon himself the Christian name Joseph.

The ensuing narrative recorded by Wendover describes the converted Jew's travels, his views concerning Christ, and his abstemious habits.¹ This account was reworked at St. Albans by Matthew Paris (+1259), Wendover's successor. His chronicle, entitled Chronica Majora, made few changes in the above narrative; however he felt it necessary to add the names of two witnesses to the event.²

Later, in his chronicle entry for the year 1252, Matthew Paris tells of a visit to the Abbey of St. Albans by a group of Armenians who testify that they know that Joseph Cartaphilus is still alive, asserting that he is a convincing argument in support of the Christian faith.³

The Wandering Jew had emerged in written histories in the thirteenth century as an actual historical figure. In Spanish and Italian variants of the legend, the Jew is not called Cartaphilus, but John Buttadeus.⁴ Another detail found in the Spanish versions of the legend, a mark in the form of a flaming cross on the Wanderer's forehead, indicates the added influence on the legend of the Biblical story of Cain

¹Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 240.

²Anderson, The Legend, p. 21.

³Anderson, The Legend, p. 21. This purported value of the Wandering Jew as a proselyting tool for Christianity is developed further in Chapter II of this study.

⁴"The derivation of Buttadeus remains a somewhat obscure matter, but the most plausible and probably the correct explanation has it that it comes from a Vulgar Latin variant of the classical Latin batuere, 'to beat or strike or shove,' plus the word for God, deus; The Italian version of the name is Botadeo and the French Boutedieu . . . the name of John, frequently given to legendary figures who live a long time (because of the Legend of St. John), speaks for itself." Anderson, The Legend, pp. 21-22.

already referred to (see p. 10).¹ The names of John and Buttadeus together readily indicate a blending of the two original legends of St. John and Malchus, which were mentioned above.

The legend persisted in recorded history in varying forms, usually associated with Cartaphilus as reported by Wendover, or with John Buttadeus in southern Europe. These varying versions overlapped in many ways, and except for the names, were very similar in content. Apparently the legend was far more popular at this time in southern Europe, since it appeared most frequently in the writings of that area.

Various vague references to the legend were made in the ensuing centuries in England, the best known reference being a passage in Geoffrey Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale. Three boisterous young men had gone in search of Death, symbolized by Chaucer as an old man, to find out about the demise of several people in their neighborhood. They met an ancient and decrepit man whose face was all that was not concealed. They questioned the old man concerning his great age. Having refused to let the old man pass, they asked him the whereabouts of Death. The old man chastised the young men for their rudeness, and then sent them to meet Death.²

The old man resembles the Wandering Jew in his vain attempt to die and in his physical appearance--a thin, emaciated, and withered face protruding from ragged clothing. It is unlikely, however, that the legend had become popular in England by 1400, for there were no

¹Railo, p. 193.

²The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer, comp. William Morris (Cleveland and New York, 1958), pp. 102-104.

other corresponding similarities in contemporaneous medieval literature.¹

It is at any rate fairly certain that the legend was relatively unknown in northern Europe before the seventeenth century. On the other hand, it is highly likely that by 1550 the Legend of the Wandering Jew was well known in southern Europe.²

That the legend should eventually gain popularity in the north was a natural consequence of this circumstance. But the legend did not breach the southern barriers until relatively late--and then finally in Germany in 1602. However, it is interesting to note that the German Volksbuch of 1602 was much more closely related to the Latin accounts recorded three hundred and fifty years earlier in England than to the more contemporary Italian and Spanish variants. The English influence on the German Volksbuch can be traced directly to Zürich, where, in 1586, the chronicle of Matthew Paris was printed.³ The German Volksbuch therefore, was influenced mainly by the Latin chronicles from England, rather than by the southern European versions of the legend.

The German Volksbuch of 1602

This unpretentious chapbook heralded the advent of the Wandering

¹George Anderson believes this character of Chaucer's invention, i.e. the old man, to be Chaucer's version of the Wandering Jew. Even though there are no further allusions to such a personage in English literature for over two hundred years, Anderson believes Chaucer encountered the legend in one of its southern European forms on a visit to the Continent and created his character in the Pardoner's Tale from that legend. Anderson, The Legend, pp. 31-32.

²Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 241.

³Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 241.

Jew in German literature.¹ The importance of this document cannot be over exaggerated, for nearly all ensuing literary treatments of the legend base their thematic development on this publication.

The popularity of this pamphlet should not be underestimated. In 1602, the year of the original publication, at least twelve separate editions of the Volksbuch were printed and published in various German-speaking cities. There were no less than thirty-three editions published in the seventeenth century, and before the end of the eighteenth century there were forty known editions.²

The reasons for the immense popularity of the Legend of the Wandering Jew as portrayed in the Volksbuch are probably religious. The theologians of the period divided the earth into two realms, the Kingdom of Christ and the Kingdom of the devil. According to this doctrine, those who did not believe in the Christian concept of the Godhead were automatically classified as non-believers and enemies of Christianity. Christian theology separated all men therefore into two categories, those believing in God through Christ, and those not truly believing in God.³ Because the Jews obviously did not accept Christ as the divine Son of God, they were on the side of the devil. Christians also believed that a figure was to be born into the world, fathered by Satan and a Jewish whore,⁴ who would lead all non-believers in all-out

¹Text of original Volksbuch is cited in the Appendix.

²Leonard Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte und Bibliographie des Volksbuchs von Ahasverus," Zeitschrift für Bücherfreunde, V (1914), 220.

³Joshua Trachtenberg, The Devil and the Jews (New Haven, 1943), p. 41.

⁴Trachtenberg, p. 35. The doctrine of Antichrist is derived from the epistles of John and Paul in the New Testament and from the Apocalypse. See I John 2:18,22; 4:3.

war against the Christians, his name being Antichrist. Anti-Jewish sentiment was popular and plays had been performed portraying Jews in the role of Antichrist.¹ Rumors were current in Germany in the sixteenth century that the Antichrist had been born in Babylon and that his followers were massing in the east for an invasion of Christian Europe.²

Consequently, when the Volksbuch containing the Legend of the Wandering Jew appeared in 1602, its value as a witness for Christ was obvious and its popularity spread rapidly throughout Europe. It is entirely possible that the original author of the Volksbuch, whose identity remains unknown, may have been a cleric who recognized the value of the legend as a weapon for Christianity.³

Even though the Wandering Jew arrived in Germany via England, the popular version of the legend was virtually unknown in Britain. But the popularity of the German Volksbuch was soon to be felt in England too. The religious significance of the Volksbuch would lead to various artistic literary developments of the legend in England and France, as well as in Germany.

The edition of the Volksbuch celebrated as the original publication was purported to have been printed in Leyden, by a printer known as Christoff Creutzer. The pamphlet may not have been printed in Leyden,

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 39.

²Trachtenberg, p. 40.

³Aaron Schaffer, "The Ahasver-Volksbuch of 1602," MP, XVII (1920), 158. This theory appears well-founded to me. M. Paris' Latin account which was printed in Zürich in 1586 (see p. 15), clearly stated its value as a witness for Christ (see p. 13). It is easy to imagine a cleric who knew Latin composing the Volksbuch as a proselytizing tool.

and there was never a printer by the name of Christoff Creutzer there. Leonard Neubaur was the first scholar to recognize the word play in the name of the printer and the city where the Volksbuch was ostensibly printed.¹ Neubaur believes these names to be fictitious and suggests them to be word play on some such expression as "Das Leiden des gekreuzigten Christus."² The exact location where the original Volksbuch was published is unknown.

The first nine editions of the pamphlet are anonymous, the tenth and most editions thereafter are ascribed to Chrysostomus Dudulaeus Westphalus, a probable pseudonym.³

Although successive editions are based on the original version of the Volksbuch, there are several minor changes in the content of the legend. For example, the tenth edition contains a poem about "Aschverus," which is probably the earliest German poem concerning the Wandering Jew. The fifteenth and sixteenth editions add new cities to the growing list of German cities visited by the ambulatory Jew. Not until the thirty-first edition is the Wanderer referred to as the "ewiger Jude."⁴

The author of the tenth edition, allegedly Westphalus, was certainly not the author of the original Volksbuch. The first nine editions are extremely similar in text and style, but the tenth differs in many ways. Even though the tenth and ensuing editions of the Volksbuch have

¹Leonard Neubaur, Die Sage vom ewigen Juden, 2nd. ed. (Leipzig, 1893), p. 43. --hereafter cited as Neubaur, Die Sage.

²Neubaur, Die Sage, p. 43.

³Schaffer, p. 157.

⁴Schaffer, p. 158.

exerted considerable influence on the development of the legend, they are most probably plagiarized and reworked versions of one of the first nine editions.¹

With only unimportant variations, the content of the Wandering Jew Volksbuch can be summarized as follows.² The title page declares the following lines to be a short description and account of a Jew named Ahasverus.³ This Jew is reported to have been present at the Crucifixion, never having returned to Jerusalem before it was destroyed, nor ever having seen his wife and children again, but to have wandered about the world until the present (the present being 1542 in Hamburg). Ahasverus is then mentioned in connection with Paulus von Eitzen, a doctor and bishop from Schleswig in Holstein.⁴

¹Schaffer, pp. 160-161.

²This summarization is necessary because nearly all literary treatments of the legend in the western world are based on this version.

³The name Ahasverus makes its original appearance in the recorded history of the Wandering Jew in the German Volksbuch. The names Malchus, John, Buttadeus, and Cartaphilus have already been mentioned in connection with the legendary Jew (see pp. 12-14). The name Ahasverus was used in the Old Testament to designate the Persian king who took Esther as his wife. This king, because of his wife's intervention, saved the lives of all the Jews in his kingdom (Book of Esther). In the sixteenth century a Jewish celebration each spring commemorated King Ahasverus' triumph over the Old Testament factions who sought to annihilate the Jews. The celebration was noted for its commemoration of the Book of Esther and for short plays (Purim plays) depicting the story of King Ahasverus. It is therefore conceivable that the author of the Volksbuch chose this unusual name for the protagonist of his tale because of its close association with the Jews and their history, and because its unusual pronunciation brought the Jews immediately to the sixteenth century German mind. For more information see Schaffer, pp. 162-164.

⁴It should be noted that although Paulus von Eitzen was an actual historical person, the Volksbuch was not published until after his death in 1598, and his name was probably used to give the legend credibility. See Werner Zirus, Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, Palaestra, CLXII (Leipzig, 1928), p. 12. --hereafter cited as Zirus, Der ewige Jude.

Eitzen is reported to have told the author of the Volksbuch and several other students of an unusual experience he had in Hamburg in 1542.

The essential details of the text of the Volksbuch begin with a short description of the setting in which the confrontation took place. Paulus von Eitzen is supposed to have noticed an unusual person in church during a sermon. The old man was barefoot and had long hair which reached to his shoulders. Each time Christ was mentioned in the sermon, the old man would hit himself on the chest and sigh deeply. The man appeared to be about fifty years old, and though it was a very cold winter, he wore only ragged pants, a cloak which reached to his knees, and over everything a cloak which reached to his feet. Paulus von Eitzen questioned him concerning his history and learned that he was a Jew from Jerusalem and was called Ahasverus. He was a shoemaker by trade.¹ He had been alive since the Crucifixion of Christ when he had told Christ, on His way to Calvary, not to rest against his house. Christ replied that He would stop and rest, but the Jew must wander.²

Von Eitzen and a director of schools in Hamburg inquired about the history of the Eastern countries since the death of Christ and the

¹Cristobel de Villalon's publication, Crotalon (ca. 1557) in Spain, apparently contains the first recorded indication that the Jew was a shoemaker. See Anderson, The Legend, pp. 29-30. The fact that the Volksbuch wanderer was described as being barefoot, "Dieser Mann oder Jud / soll so dicke fuszsohlen haben / das mans gemessen / zweyer Zwerch Finger dick gewesen / gleich wie ein horn so hart wegen seines langes gehen unnd Reysen / . . ." (see Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 250) appears to me to be meant as wry humor in view of the introduction of the Jew as a shoemaker.

²The Volksbuch omitted the usual duration of the curse, normally limited until Christ comes again. The German Ahasverus did not know, therefore, what was to become of him. This was an important omission because it helped to establish the Jew's misery, thereby contributing to his eventual artistic role as worldly sufferer.

Jew gave exact and satisfying answers.

The Jew told of his personal habits at this point. He was quiet and retiring in character; he did not speak nor eat to excess; he would never take more than two schillings if offered money, and would immediately give those to the poor; he always spoke the language of the country in which he was wandering. People came from far and near to see and hear him. He spoke of God only in great reverence and with deep sighs. If he heard anyone curse God's wounds and suffering, he would tremble and reproach that person with words of abuse.

The Volksbuch ends with the explanation that all of these things were told Paulus von Eitzen and several others standing around in the presence of the strange Jew. An account of a visit by the Jew in 1575 to Madrid, during which he spoke perfect Spanish, is also included. The reader is then given free choice as to what he wants to believe concerning this strange account and is assured that the works of God will be made known in the last days. The text is dated at Schleswig, June 9, 1564.¹

The Volksbuch is similar in so many details to the account written by Matthew Paris in his Chronica Majora and published in Zürich in 1586 that it is obvious that the author of the Volksbuch was well acquainted with that version.

The publication of the Volksbuch in 1602 popularized the legend and prepared the way for its use in western literature. Even though the story had been popular for several centuries in folklore, it is question-

¹Zirus, Der Ewige Jude, pp. 8-11.

able if it would ever have bridged the chasm between folk legend and literature had it not been for the Volksbuch.

And from the Ahasuerus-Book spring both the anti-Semitism (which is not at all a feature of the medieval treatment of the protagonist) and the varied symbolisms of the Jew as a representative of sin, omniscience, political liberty, social unconventionality, and Jewish nationalism, which characterize the art-form of the legend of the Wandering Jew in later years.¹

Nevertheless, the Volksbuch was popular in its own right as has already been indicated, and it was to be many years before the legend would be used as a literary theme in works by major authors. Several inconsequential treatments of the legend appeared in the next few years as direct results of the Volksbuch. In their own way they kept the legend alive and helped to prepare the way for the legend's popularity as a literary theme in later years. The most important of these works in Germany was probably the treatment of the Legend of the Wandering Jew by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. His interest in the legend as a literary theme established the legend's usefulness in literature.

Goethe's Fragments

Goethe was the first German author of renown² to recognize the usefulness of the Wandering Jew legend as a literary theme. He planned

¹George K. Anderson, "Popular Survivals of the Wandering Jew in England," JEGP, XLVI (1947), 368. --hereafter cited as Anderson, "Popular Survivals."

²Goethe was preceded in his use of Ahasverus in German literature by an unknown author of a drama, "Spiel von Ahasver" (ca. 1708). No copies of this play are extant. See Johann Prost, Die Saga vom ewigen Juden in der neueren deutschen Literatur (Leipzig, 1905), p. 12.

an extensive work centered around the Wandering Jew, in which he wanted to bring out his private interpretation of Christianity:

. . . die Kluft, die mich von jener Lehre trennte, ward mir deutlich, ich musste also auch aus dieser Gesellschaft scheiden, und da mir meine Neigung zu den heiligen Schriften sowie zu dem Stifter und den früheren Bekennern nicht geraubt werden konnte, so bildete ich mir ein Christentum zu meinem Privatgebrauch und suchte dieses durch fleissiges Studium der Geschichte und durch genaue Bemerkung derjenigen, die sich zu meinem Sinne hingeneigt hatten, zu begründen und aufzubauen.

Weil nun aber alles, was ich mit Liebe in mich aufnahm, sich sogleich zu einer dichterischen Form anlegte, so ergriff ich den wunderlichen Einfall, die Geschichte des ewigen Juden, die sich schon früh durch die Volksbücher bei mir eingedrückt hatte, episch zu behandeln, um an diesem Leitfaden die hervorstechenden Punkte der Religions- und Kirchengeschichte nach Befinden darzustellen.¹

There appears to be a great gulf between Goethe's plan for the Wandering Jew epic as he envisioned it in Dichtung und Wahrheit and the seven fragments which were actually written. Ahasverus himself plays a role secondary to that of Christ, and it appears that the work may have developed more into an epic concerning the Second Coming of Christ than an epic of the Wandering Jew. However, speculation is all that is possible, because the work remained a fragment.²

Goethe's intention to write an epic centering around the Legend of the Wandering Jew contributed to the legend's literary popularity. Goethe's fragments were written in 1774.³ Though not published at that

¹Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Aus Meinem Leben Dichtung und Wahrheit, ed. Lieselotte Blumenthal, X (Hamburg, 1955), pp. 44-45.

²For more information see Jakob Minor, Goethes Fragmente vom ewigen Juden und vom wiederkehrenden Heiland (Stuttgart and Berlin, 1904).

³Minor, p. 47.

time, Goethe's fragments and his comments concerning them undoubtedly influenced many treatments of the legend. The fact that Goethe recognized artistic merit in the legend is indication enough that the Wandering Jew was on the threshold of a literary career.

It is obvious from a study of the early written history of the Legend of the Wandering Jew that it did not become popular as an artistic theme for many years after its inception in the Volksbuch. The fact that Ahasverus represented a theme which could readily be interpreted as romantic probably hindered its literary usefulness. Nevertheless, the legend continued to exist in the minds of the people in the form popularized by the author of the Volksbuch. The introduction of the wandering motif was probably behind the gradual development of the legend into a useful literary theme. The intrigue of an undying Jew cursed to wander from place to place probably kept the legend alive generally. Many people must have believed that the Jew actually existed, as reports of his presence in Germany and in other countries continued to circulate. Many imposters were able to pass themselves off as the wanderer, and scholarly critics attacked the authenticity of the tale with a certain degree of hesitancy--admitting all things are possible with God.¹ At any rate, the legend remained very popular and it was but a question of time until the legend's usefulness as an artistic theme would begin to make itself felt in literature.

The very essence of the legend as an extension of folk-myth contributes to its usefulness as a literary motif. The different and

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 120.

innumerable characteristics of the legend as circulated among the people of many countries provide sources for countless thematic variants within the legend proper. According to Johann Prost, ". . . , ja, neben dem Faust und dem Tannhäuser, bringt keine andere Legende einen reicheren Schatz entwicklungsfähiger poetischer Gedanken."¹

The idea of immortality as punishment in a religious sense is in itself a pregnant literary theme. The Wandering Jew's presence on earth for almost two thousand years presents literary possibilities. The racial overtones of the legend provide an additional alternative for literary development. And yet another artistic possibility exists in the Jew's mortal misery and death wish.

These four literary themes which have emerged out of the Legend of the Wandering Jew as related in the Volksbuch of 1602 appear to me to be of major importance. Although other more subtle variations of these themes occur, nevertheless, they all seem to me to find their roots in these basic four topics. The following study is an attempt to summarize these four thematic patterns and to illustrate their development in literature.

¹Prost, p. 10.

CHAPTER III

RELIGIOUS INTERPRETATIONS OF THE LEGEND OF THE WANDERING JEW

As has been previously mentioned, the Legend of the Wandering Jew as it appeared in the Volksbuch of 1602 became very popular. At the beginning of the seventeenth century superstition played an important role in the lives of many people. Furthermore, the advent of Antichrist and the end of the world had been prophesied to take place at that time.¹

The legend, as retold in the Volksbuch, had its roots in Scripture. Furthermore, the author of the Volksbuch alluded to the end of the world and the Day of Judgement:

Was nun von dieser Mans Person zuhalten: davon steht jedem sein JUDICIUM frey: Die werck Gottes seind wunderbarlich und unerforschlich / und werden je lenger je mehr ding / die biszhero verborgen gewesen / Nun mehr gegen dem zunahenden Jüngsten Tag und ende der Welt offenbaret / wol dem der es in rechtem verstandt auffnimbt und er kennete unnd sich daran nicht Ergert.²

The religious significance of the legend contributed greatly to the popularity of the Volksbuch. In addition, Ahasverus was a baptized Christian, a detail which was taken from Matthew Paris. His conversion and testimony to Christ made Ahasverus a valuable proselyting tool for Christianity, and he was consequently accepted enthusiastically by his reading audience as an authentic witness for Christ.³

¹Werner Zirus, Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, Palaestra, CLXIII (Leipzig, 1928), p. 14.

²George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 249.

³Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 15.

Because the legend was of Christian origin and in its original form continued to support the cause of Christianity, it is not surprising that one of its earliest uses as a literary theme was religious in nature. Nearly all literary works based on the legend in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries are somehow related to the legend's religious tendencies. Religious interpretations of Ahasverus in German literature appear to me to be threefold. The most common function of the Wandering Jew was as a witness to the divinity of Christ.

Ahasverus, A Witness for Christ

Four hundred years after Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris introduced the Legend of the Wandering Jew to England in the Latin chronicles only to have it fade into oblivion, the legend returned to England as a literary theme.¹ In 1612, license was issued in London for the printing of a ballad and a prose account of the legend. There are no extant copies of these printings known today. A ballad contained in the collection The Roxburghe Ballads, entitled "The Wandering Jew Or The Shooemaker of Jerusalem. Who lived when our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was Crucified, and by him was appointed to Live till his Coming again" could possibly be the missing ballad, as its date of issue is given as either August 21, 1612, or October 9, 1620.² At any rate this early English ballad was undoubtedly based on the legend as it appeared in the German Volksbuch, though possibly detoured to England by way of

¹Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 242.

²The Roxburghe Ballads, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth, VI (Hertford, 1886; reprint New York, 1966), 693-694.

France where the Volksbuch had been translated into French.¹ This ballad exemplifies the original value of the legend as a tool for expounding Christian dogma;²

'I'll rest,' said he, 'but thou shalt walk!' so doth this Wandering Jew
From place to place, but cannot stay for seeing countries new,
Declaring still the Power of Him, where'er he comes or goes;
And of all things done in the East, since Christ his death, he shows.

He is not seen to laugh or smile, but weep and make great moan,
Lamenting still his miseries, and days fore spent and gone.
If he hears any one Blaspheme, or take God's name in vain;
He tells them that they crucify Our Saviour Christ again.

"If thou had'st seen grim Death," said he, "as these mine eyes have done,
Ten thousand thousand times, would ye his Torments think upon;
And suffer for His sake all pains, all torments, and all woes."
These are his words, and this his life, where'er he comes and goes.³

The author of this ballad carried the theme of Ahasverus acting as a witness for Christ throughout his poem. The above lines clearly indicate the legend's usefulness as such. The religious overtones of this ballad are obvious.

Another poem which portrays Ahasverus as a witness for Christ is entitled "Die Warnung," (1801) by August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767-1845). This poem also takes its central theme from the Legend of the Wandering Jew as accounted in the Volksbuch. In the Volksbuch Ahasverus is des-

¹George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew (Providence, 1965), p. 60.

²See pp. 56-57 for anti-Semitic study of this ballad.

³The Roxburghe Ballads, p. 694.

cribed as being visibly distressed whenever he encounters blasphemy:

Welches aber er nit dafür gehalten / weil er nit allein Gottes wort gern
gehört und davon geredt / auch alwegen mit grosser andacht und grossem
seufftzen den Namen Gottes genennt: Sondern auch das er kein Fluchen
dulden können / dann wann er iemandt bey Gottes leyden und wunden Flu-
chen höret / er darüber erzittert und mit grimmigen eyffer getrawet.
Du Elender Mensch / du Elender Creatur / soltu den Namen Gottes und
seine Marter also miszbrauchen / Ja soltestu gesehen unnd gehört haben /
wie sawr dem Herrn Christo seine Wunden und Leyden / dein und meinet
wegen worden were / wie ichs gesehen / dur würdest dir ehe leidt thun
lassen / dann du also seinen Namen nennest.¹

Schlegel probably had this description of Ahasverus in mind when he wrote his "warning."

As the Wandering Jew stops at an inn for a drink, he encounters two young men who are ridiculing Christ in a most blasphemous manner. The Jew stares at them in such a stern fashion while listening to their boisterous blasphemy that they become nervous. Finally they become so uncomfortable that they ridicule the Jew and tell him to mind his own business.² But the Wandering Jew tells them of his persecution of Christ when he too was young and of his consequential punishment as a wanderer. He warns them:

Junges Blut hat Frevelmuth:
Thut nicht ferner, so wie ihr thut,
Und lasst bey Zeiten euch warnen.

¹ Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 249.

² There is an interesting parallel found in the situation in this poem and a situation found in Geoffrey Chaucer's Pardoner's Tale, already mentioned in this study (see pp. 14-15). Schlegel likely based his poem on Chaucer's narration. Even though the situations in the two works are different, the parallels are striking. In each, young men confront an ancient man and ridicule him; the young men are chastized by the old man; and the young men die as a result of their blasphemy.

Sonst schliesst ihr einen Bund der Treu
 Mit Judas falscher Notte;
 Den Heiland kreuzigt ihr aufs neu
 Mit solchem kecken Spotte.--¹

The Wandering Jew's message in this concerns the divinity of Christ. He bears witness to the young men that the message of Christ is true and calls them to repentance. Having told them of the punishment meted out to him for his blasphemy, the Jew warns the young men that they too will be punished. The young men are genuinely touched by the Jew's message and are deeply frightened. Suddenly a blood-red cross appears on the forehead of the Jew.² The young men believe themselves already damned. ". . . Sie glaubten sich schon in der Hölle."³ Having warned the young men, the Wandering Jew departs, leaving them with their thoughts. But their change of heart comes too late:

Zu spät zerknirscht sie's und gereut's,
 Gott lässt mit sich nicht scherzen;
 Es brennt das feurig blut'ge Kreuz

¹August Wilhelm Schlegel, "Die Warnung," Poetische Werke, I (Heidelberg, 1811), 199.

²This blood-red cross which appeared on the Wandering Jew's forehead was a carry-over detail from the story of Cain in the Old Testament. After Cain killed Abel, he was cursed with a physical sign so no one would kill him. "And the Lord said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the Lord set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him." (Gen. 4:15). Somehow this "mark of Cain" became fused with the Legend of the Wandering Jew and often appears in connection with it (see pp. 13-14). For more information see Daniel Moncure Conway, The Wandering Jew (New York, 1881), pp. 71-79.

³Schlegel, p. 202.

In den lieblosen Herzen.
 Kirchentrost ward nicht gespart,
 Busse, Gebet und Pilgerfahrt,
 Doch lebten die Spötter nicht lange.¹

The religious message carried by the Wandering Jew is strongly emphasized with the deaths of the young men: Christ lives, do not blaspheme Him; the punishment is great!

An important contribution to the growing list of German literature associated with the legend is a drama in two parts written by Ludwig von Arnim (1781-1831) entitled "Halle und Jerusalem" (1811). This drama is based on Andreas Gryphius' Cardenio und Celinde (1657).

In "Halle," the first part of the play, Ahasverus remains in the background. The plot revolves around Cardenio, a reckless and adventuresome young man. Olympe, a young girl enamored of Cardenio, is compromised into marriage with another suitor--Lysander. Consequently Cardenio indulges in various illicit affairs, finally becoming deeply involved with Celinde. Cardenio kills a parson who is likewise courting Celinde. Cardenio and Celinde have sinned. Cardenio has killed and Celinde has become pregnant. Together they approach the wise Jew Ahasverus, seeking advice. He recommends a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the repentant couple.

The second part of the drama, "Jerusalem," is concerned with the pilgrimage. After a shipwreck and other adventures, Ahasverus reveals that he is the father of Cardenio. Because Cardenio's mother later married and bore Olympe, Lysander had unknowingly prevented incest.

¹ Schlegel, p. 203.

Finally arriving at the Holy Sepulcher, the three travelers frighten away a group of Jews attempting to set fire to the shrine. Ahasverus unexpectedly dies. Shortly thereafter the repentant Cardenio and Celinde die also.

Arnim's Ahasverus too is a witness for Christ. In "Halle," he testifies of the divinity of Christ to his own race, the Jews:

Schweigt, was fragt ihr, wer ich bin? Wisst, ich bin der ew'ge Jude, der zum zehntenmal zur Reise um den Erdball ist gezwungen, euch zu bessern, zu bekehren, dass ihr lernt aus meinem Jammer an den wahren Heiland glauben, den mein hartes Herz verspottet, dem ich ins Gesicht gespien, als er trug am schweren Kreuze, den ich von dem Sitz gestossen, als er keuchend von der Last vor dem Haus sich niedersetzte, wo ich trieb mein Schusterhandwerk. Bis ihr Juden all getauftet, kann ich keine Ruhe finden, muss durch alle Länder ziehen, seh' euch martern, quälen, schinden, wie ihr dabei lächerlich. Also muss ich euch erblicken, die ihr seid von meinem Blute, von dem Blut, aus dem geboren ward das ewig wahre Wort.¹

Ahasverus speaks later of the need for everyone to believe in Christ:

Doch will ich Ihnen im Vertrauen sagen, dass unsre Zeit bald verlaufen ist, die Zeit, wo der Messias kann erscheinen, nur wenig Jahre noch, dann müssen wir gesamt an euren Heiland glauben. . . . Durch Tod geht Auferstehung auch im Christentume.²

Ahasverus' mention of the Second Coming of Christ is reminiscent of the declaration in the Volksbuch (see p. 26). He continues to testify to the truth of Christianity.

Clemens Brentano (1778-1842) also allows the Wandering Jew to function as a witness for Christ. In Brentano's "Blätter aus dem Tage-

¹Ludwig Achim von Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem," Arnims Werke, ed. Monty Jacobs, III (Berlin, Leipzig, Wien and Stuttgart, n.d.), 79. --hereafter cited as Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem."

²Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem," p. 120.

buche der Ahnfrau," (1830), Ahasverus enters upon the scene and is offered alms:

Schön' Dank! ich brauch' nicht Gut noch Geld,
 Mir fehlt, was ich versaget,
 Hab Müdem keinen Sitz gestellt,
 Werd' ruhlos umgejaget.
 Kömmt je mit seinem Kreuz zu dir
 Ein müder Mann gegangen.
 Lass' ruhen ihn und schenke mir
 Die Lieb', die er empfangen.
 Sitz' zu ihm, hör' ihn an mit Huld,
 In Ihm dem Herrn dies thue,
 Dann zahlst du mild an meiner Schuld
 Und hilfst zu meiner Ruhe!¹

Ahasverus spreads Christ's teaching of brotherly love by instructing his new acquaintance always to be ready to give a tired man the chance to rest and speak. Thereby Ahasverus too will gain grace in the eyes of the Lord for spreading the message of Christ to all men he meets. As before, Ahasverus acts as a mouthpiece for Christ.

Many authors in the early nineteenth century recognized the potential in the Legend of the Wandering Jew as a witness to the divinity of Christ. Ahasverus had witnessed the Crucifixion of the Saviour and had been baptized a Christian. What better witness to the truth was there? But this was not the only religious interpretation in literature to focus on the Wandering Jew.

Christian Significance of Death: A Doorway to Freedom

The most significant aspect of the Legend of the Wandering Jew is the curse of never-ending life. The idea of an indefinitely continued

¹Clemens Brentano, "Blätter aus dem Tagebuche der Ahnfrau," Gesammelte Schriften, IV (Frankfurt/Main, 1852), 70.

existence during which one would testify to the divinity of Christ was probably not originally regarded as a punishment, but rather a privilege. In the New Testament Luke quotes Christ in this respect:

For whosoever shall be ashamed of me and of my words, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own glory, and in his Father's, and of the holy angels.

But I tell you of a truth, there be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the kingdom of God. (Luke 9:26-27)

It would appear from this passage that some true believers in Christ would be blessed with eternal life as a reward for their belief. Eternal life was not referred to as a curse, but as a blessing.¹

Why then was Ahasverus cursed with immortality while the Bible appears to indicate that continued mortal existence would be a blessing? Christian dogma apparently underwent some changes in the intervening years between those recorded in the Bible and the emergence of the Legend of the Wandering Jew in western literature. Then Christians no longer considered mortal life a privilege. Life to the devout Christian had become a place of toil, sorrow and pain. Death had come to represent the doorway to glory and exultation, to freedom from earthly trials. When one considers the scriptures in the Old Testament concerning man's future existence on this earth, this evolution of thought becomes more comprehensible:

¹Other Biblical scriptures which gave rise to the Wandering Jew legend and which further support the concept that continued existence upon the earth is a privilege have already been referred to (see pp. 8-9). It is interesting that two contradictory interpretations of life and death should both have their source in the Bible.

Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.

And unto Adam he said, Behold thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life;

Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field;

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return. (Gen. 3:16-19)

In the religious atmosphere of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries the immortality of the Wandering Jew was generally viewed as a punishment meted out for extreme transgression--in this instance against Christ personally. This notion followed the Jew into the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as interpreted in literature. Death was not considered as the end of happiness, rather as the beginning:

In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
(I Cor. 15:52-55)

Ahasverus would not experience the release of death. He was cursed to roam the earth without being allowed to die. His worldly suffering

would be far greater than that of normal man's. Ahasverus' desire to die can therefore be interpreted as the Christian longing to be relieved of the trials of this life through death.

In most accounts containing reference to the Wandering Jew his longing for death stands out as if this were his trademark. In Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart's (1739-1791) fragment entitled "Der ewige Jude, Eine lyrische Rhapsodie," published in 1787, Ahasverus' desire for death is impressively evident. After Ahasverus maltreats Christ in his normal fashion, an angel appears and bestows upon him the punishment of wandering:

Ein schwarzer höllentflohner
Dämon geisselt nun dich, Ahasver,
Von Land zu Land. Des Sterbens süßser Trost,
Der Grabesruhe Trost ist dir versagt!¹

Throughout the poem Ahasverus bemoans his fate and tells how he has continually sought death. He rolls the skulls of his family down Mount Carmel, lamenting his inability to join them in death:

Sie konnten sterben!--Aber ich Verworfenner,
Ich kann nicht sterben--Ach! das furchtbarste Gericht
Hängt schreckenbrüllend ewig über mir.--²

Ahasverus recounts the varied attempts he has made to die: he has jumped into the sea; he has jumped into a volcano; he has run into several fires; he has fought in wars; he has been trampled by an elephant, and

¹Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, "Der ewige Jude," Schubarts Werke in einem Band (Berlin and Weimar, 1965), pp. 298-299.

²Schubart, p. 299.

so on through a diverse catalogue of attempts to find death. Ahasverus finally confesses that immortality is too great a curse--he would welcome any other:

Ha! nicht sterben können, nicht sterben können!--
 Schrecklicher Zürner im Himmel,
 Hast du in deinem Rüsthause
 Noch ein schrecklicheres Gericht?!
 Ha, so lass es niederdonnern auf mich!--
 Mich wälz ein Wettersturm
 Von Karmels Rücken hinunter,
 Dass ich an seinem Fusse
 Ausgestreckt lieg--
 Und keuch--und zuck und sterbe!--¹

Reference to Ahasverus' death wish can be found in nearly all of the lyrical reworkings of the legend, even those which occur later in the nineteenth century.

An interesting poem by Nikolaus Lenau (1802-1850), "Ahasver, der ewige Jude," (1832), though most important as a symbolic expression of Weltschmerz (see p. 74), nevertheless expresses Ahasverus' wish to die. In this poem a young shepherd boy has died. Family and friends surround his body crying, as Ahasverus approaches the group and reveals to them the joys of death:

So! betet still, dass ihr ihn nicht erweckt!
 Hemmt eurer Tränen undankbare Flut!
 Sein Schlaf ist gut, o dieser Schlaf ist gut!
 Wenn er auch Toren euresgleichen schreckt.
 O süßser Schlaf! o süßser Todesschlaf!
 Könnt ich, mich rastend in die Grube schmiegen!
 Könnt ich, wie der, in deinen Armen liegen,
 Den schon so früh dein milder Segen traf!²

¹Schubart, p. 301.

²Nikolaus Lenau, "Ahasver, der ewige Jude," Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in 6 Bänden, ed. Eduard Castle, I (Leipzig, 1910), 75.

Ahasverus enviously tells of the boy's good fortune to have died so early in life. He expresses his own desire and search for death and his agony in continued mortal existence.

The Wandering Jew's intent longing for death and his release from worldly trials is a religious motif. To the Christian, death is the symbolic doorway to glory. I believe the religious connotations underlying the original curse of eternal life, as it is stated in the Volksbuch, prompted the revival of interest in the legend. Ahasverus' death wish took on a new interpretation as the literary theme continued to develop (to be discussed in Chapter VI), but its original interpretation was religious in nature. The symbolic value of death as the doorway to freedom, therefore, has an important role in the religious interpretation of the Legend of the Wandering Jew.

Death for Ahasverus: Remission of Sin Through Repentance

In further pursuing the religious significance of the Legend of the Wandering Jew and its influence on the artistic development of the theme, it is significant that several authors of Ahasverus lyric allowed the Jew to attain forgiveness. This absolution is presented in the guise of death or a promise of death. The repentant Ahasverus is granted an end to his suffering through death. In this sense, the legend exhibits the Christian tenet of forgiveness of sin through repentance:

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. (Isaiah 55:7)

Repent therefore of this thy wickedness, and pray God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee. (Acts 8:22)

In Schubart's "Der ewige Jude," which has already been mentioned (see pp. 36-37), Ahasverus is finally promised that the wrath of God is not eternal. After Ahasverus has cursed his fate and declared himself ready to accept any other punishment in place of immortality, he falls into a deep sleep as an angel again visits him:

Und Ahasveros sank. Ihm klang's im Ohr;
Nacht deckte seine borst'gen Augenwimper.
Ein Engel trug ihn wieder ins Geklüft.
'Da schlaf nun', sprach der Engel, 'Ahasver,
Schlaf süßen Schlaf; Gott zürnt nicht ewig!
Wenn du erwachst, so ist er da,
Des Blut auf Golgatha du fliessen sahst,
Und der--auch dir verzeiht.¹

According to Schubart, God is ready to reward Ahasverus' repentant spirit with death.

Aloys Schreiber (1763-1841) wrote a ballad entitled "Der ewige Jude," which appeared originally in the Stuttgarter Morgenblatt in 1807. In this poem Ahasverus cannot enjoy life and nature, life's only pleasures available to all mankind without prejudice, because of restlessness. He is unable to drink from a fountain, to rest in the shade of a tree, or to pluck a flower and enjoy its fragrance, "Denn der Geist der Rache ruft."² He differs from Schubart's Ahasverus in that he has never had a chance to enjoy anything, whereas Schubart's Jew became weary of life and what it had to offer. Schreiber's Wanderer becomes so estranged from the world finally, that he flees from all mankind. On an

¹Schubart, pp. 301-302.

²Aloys Wilhelm Schreiber, "Der ewige Jude, eine Ballade," Schreybers poetische Werke, I, pt. 3 (Tübingen, 1817), 254.

impulse he bows before a crucifix on the roadside and implores Christ to forgive him. His prayers are answered:

Wer gefehlt hat, darf bereuen
Und mein Antlitz keiner scheuen,
Der mich liebt und an mich glaubt.
Hättest an des Kreuzes Stufen
Früher du zu mir gerufen,
Längst getilgt wär deine Schuld.¹

The Wanderer is found dead, kneeling before the cross. This Ahasverus also receives forgiveness for his transgressions through repentance.

In L.A. von Arnim's "Halle und Jerusalem" already mentioned (see pp. 31-32), Ahasverus too finds death. Ahasverus has earned his salvation through his personal repentance and through his successful efforts to inspire repentance in other, i.e. Cardenio and Celinde:

So zieh zum heiligen Grabe unsres Herrn, zum Mittelpunkt der ganzen Welt, er lösete schon manches Pilgers Schuld, der gläubig zu ihm hingewallet, du bist nur eine Sünderin wie viele. Entsagung kann dir Keuschheit wiederbringen.²

In the above passage, the Jew promises Celinde the return of her chastity if she will repent and undertake a pilgrimage. He refuses to advise Cardenio, but indicates he is more in need of repentance than Celinde:

Dir rat' ich nicht; was du beginnen willst, das komme aus dir selbst, doch lasse andre glauben, wie ihnen in das Herz geschrieben, doch sag' ich dir, du hast, Cardenio, noch mehr als dieses Mädchen grosse Busse nötig, du von vier Seelen Angeklageter, den schon die weltliche Gerechtigkeit verfolgt.³

¹Schreiber, p. 256.

²Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem," p. 145.

³Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem," p. 147.

Because Ahasverus himself repents of his sins, he is finally allowed to die. In his dying breath he continues to praise the Lord:

Selig, selig, wer den Herren schauet,
 Ach, es weicht die dunkle Erde,
 Kinder, Kinder, ihm allein vertrauet,
 Segnet Schmerzen dieser Erde,
 Meine Tränen, meine Leiden
 Sind erblüht zu ew'gen Freuden.¹

True repentance has brought forgiveness to Ahasverus.

A poem written by Karl Witte (1767-1845), which originally appeared in 1820, also promises Ahasverus death. The poem, "Der laufende Jude auf der Grimsel,"² describes the Wanderer's surroundings on three different trips to the Grimsel, a mountain in Switzerland. The first time he finds a vineyard, the second time a pine forest, and the third time a wasteland of ice and snow. On his third visit, Ahasverus joyously awaits the return of spring to the Grimsel, for the reawakening of the world free from snow, here symbolic of sin, will enable him to die and finally find rest:

Wenn alle Welt dann froh erwacht,
 Entbunden ihrer Sünden,
 Dann geh ich ein in Grabesnacht,
 Um endlich Ruh zu finden.³

¹Arnim, "Halle und Jerusalem," p. 227.

²This poem revived the Swiss folktale concerning the Wandering Jew, which, according to George Anderson, was the most influential and widely known tale of the Jew in Switzerland. Ahasverus visited the Grimsel on three separate occasions. The first time he saw a village, the second time only open fields, and the third time ice and snow. The Wandering Jew cried and the lake called Grimselmeer was formed. See Anderson, The Legend, p. 83.

³Karl Witte, "Der laufende Jude auf der Grimsel," Deutsche Sagen aus dem Munde deutscher Dichter und Schriftsteller, comp. August Nodnagel (Dresden and Leipzig, 1836), p. 155.

The Legend of the Wandering Jew found its first authentic usefulness as an artistic literary theme because of its roots in religious interpretation. The religion-influenced atmosphere of the seventeenth, and parts of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries provided fertile soil in which the legend was able to germinate and sprout. The religious teaching in most literary works containing reference to Ahasverus were varied. I have attempted, however, to illustrate that they can be grouped in three fairly broad and yet distinguishable subgroups: Ahasverus as a witness for Christ; Ahasverus' longing for death symbolizing the Christian concept of death as liberation; and Ahasverus' attainment of death or promise of death symbolizing the Christian concept of forgiveness of sin through repentance.

CHAPTER IV

THE WANDERING JEW AS HISTORIAN

The ceaseless wanderings of Ahasverus since the death of the Saviour suited him for the role of historian. Inasmuch as he had been a living witness to the unfolding of history, it is easily understood why early authors often used him as a teacher of history. In the Volksbuch his knowledge of Oriental history was reported to be extraordinary, and it is this minor piece of information which likely prompted his role as a teller of histories:

Auff dises / habe er Paulus von Eitzen / bey neben dem Rector der Schulen zu Hamburg / welcher ein gelerter und in Historijs erfahrner Mann gewesen / mit jme von allerhand geschichten / so sich in den Orientalischen Landen / nach Christi zeiten hero verlossen / conferiert: Da hab er jnen alle umständt und gnugsamen bericht davon gegeben / das sie sich darüber nicht gnugsam verwundern können.¹

This aspect of the Ahasverus motif was employed in several narratives at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The use of Ahasverus as a mere conveyer of history may not have been especially original as far as these authors were concerned, but this type of role nevertheless helped the Wandering Jew to gain popularity as a literary figure.

The earliest work of extant literature in which the Wandering Jew functions as a historian is the old English ballad, "The Wandering Jew's Chronicle," which was printed in four distinct issues, the first appear-

¹George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 249.

ing August 11, 1634.¹ In this ballad the Wandering Jew has absolutely no role to play, except in the form of observer. The "Chronicle" is nothing more than a catalogue in verse of the rulers of England from William the Conqueror to Queen Katherine. The last publication of the "Chronicle," sometime after October 11, 1727, continued the list of rulers to George the Second.² The subtitle of the ballad refers to the Wandering Jew as "the old Historian" and claims he recounted each Coronation which had occurred in England only in order to stave off boredom.³ The text of the ballad begins with William the Conqueror at a time when the Wandering Jew was but fifteen years of age.⁴

The Wandering Jew's Chronicle;
Or,
The old Historian, his brief declaration,

¹The Roxburghe Ballads, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth, VI (Hertford, 1886; reprint New York, 1966), 697.

²The Roxburghe Ballads, p. 698.

³The Roxburghe Ballads, p. 697.

⁴The reason why the Wandering Jew is only fifteen years of age in 1066, is not explained. According to Roger of Wendover's account, Ahasverus was thirty years old when Christ was crucified, and each time he reached the age of one hundred years, he reverted physically to the stature of a thirty year old man. Werner Zirus claimed that the author of the ballad was simply indifferent to details of the legend. "Warum der ewige Jude im Jahre 1066 erst 15 Jahre alt war, lässt sich nur aus dem Bestreben des Autors erklären, die vornormannische Zeit zu ignorieren. Krasser konnte die Gleichgültigkeit gegen die Legende nicht ausgedrückt werden." (Werner Zirus, Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, Palaestra, CLXII (Leipzig, 1928), p. 19.) Zirus, however, failed to realize that Ahasverus' age of thirty years at the time of the Crucifixion and his return to that age every seventy years was not mentioned in the early editions of the Volksbuch. I am certain, therefore, that the author of the "Chronicle" was not indifferent, he was ignorant. He assigned the age of fifteen years to the Wandering Jew arbitrarily.

Made in a mad fashion, of each Coronation,
 That pass'd in this Nation, since William's Invasion,
 For no great occasion, but meer Recreation,
 To put off Vexation.

To the Tune of, Our Prince is welcome out of Spain.

(Woodcut portraits of the Kings, from William I. to Charles I. and Queen.)

When William Duke of Normandy with all his Normans gallantly
 This Kingdom did subdue;
 Full fifteen years of age I was, and what e're since hath come to pass,
 I can repeat for true.¹

Even though the Wandering Jew's role in this ballad is negligible, the usefulness of his personage as a historical observer has been recognized and put into print.

It is likely this general recognition of the Wandering Jew's historical importance among the reading public which prompted an unknown author to rename his publication of 1640, "The Wandering Jew telling Fortunes to Englishmen. A Jew's Lottery." This same pamphlet had appeared in 1609 under the title, "The Man in the Moon telling Strange Fortunes, or The English Fortune Teller."² The text of this work has nothing to do with either the man in the moon or the Wandering Jew. It is likely that the pamphlet was renamed to enhance its popularity.³ The mention of the Wandering Jew in the role of a fortune teller indicates

¹The Roxburghe Ballads, p. 695.

²Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 20. Noteworthy is the fact that there was another legend concerning the man in the moon which paralleled the Legend of the Wandering Jew. There was once a Jew who gathered wood on the Sabbath and was damned to exist eternally as the man in the moon. It is probably based on the Bible verses, Numbers 15:32-36. See Zirus, p. 22.

³Zirus, Der ewige Jude, pp. 21-22.

that his usefulness as an observer of the past, present, and future had been recognized.

Another early example of the Wandering Jew in the role of historian is found in the work entitled Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy, Who Lived Five and Forty Years Undiscover'd at Paris, the first edition of which appeared in 1686. This was a popular translation of the work written by Giovanni Marana, an Italian living in Paris. He apparently wrote the original in Italian and translated it into French in 1684; William Bradshaw translated it into English.¹

This novel was very popular in England. The book contains a series of letters supposedly written by the Turkish spy, Mehemet Hali, while he was in Paris. After the spy was forced to leave Paris in a hurry, Marana purportedly found and translated the letters. In the thirty-ninth letter of the second volume, Hali tells of a meeting with the Wandering Jew, who called himself Michob Ader. The Jew tells the story of his curse and elaborates upon many events which have occurred in the course of history. The Jew indicates that most historians have erred in their summations of various historical events, and describes the same as seen through the eyes of an eye witness.² The author portrays the Wandering Jew as an accurate observer of history.

An important work which employed the Wandering Jew as a historian appeared in France in 1777. Because it is considered "the evident progenitor of all later surveys of this type,"³ it should be mentioned in

¹George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew (Providence, 1965), p. 128.

²Zirus, Der ewige Jude, pp. 23-24.

³Anderson, The Legend, p. 141.

connection with Ahasverus' role as historian. The anonymous work is entitled Memoires du juif errant. The content of the book involves the Wandering Jew and four young men of varying nationalities: German, French, Italian, and English. These five persons meet at a fair at Leipzig, Germany. The Wandering Jew tells the young men of his travels and about the dominant figures and events of world history. The German records the Jew's account on paper.¹ This French narrative was apparently well done, as it became the pattern for many historical narratives to follow.

The first German historical work to appear in which the Wandering Jew played a significant role was Der ewige Jude. Geschicht- oder Volksroman, wie man will, the first edition appearing in 1785. The author of this obvious reworking of Memoires du juif errant was Heinrich A.O. Reichard (1751-1828).² Reichard was a relatively unimportant author. His special interest was in travelogues and descriptive geography; his interest in the Legend of the Wandering Jew was therefore understandable. As the subtitle of his work indicates, Reichard was unsure of just how he should treat the legend. He therefore left judgement up to the reader whether to accept the work as history or folktale. Reichard's version of the meeting of the four young men with Ahasverus is very similar to that found in the French work. The style is more sophisticated, however, and Reichard's work was very popular.³

In this narrative Ahasverus is a very prominent figure. He is no

¹Anderson, The Legend, pp. 141-142.

²Albert Soergel, Ahasver-Dichtungen seit Goethe (Leipzig, 1905), p. 39.

³Soergel, p. 39.

longer the humble, quiet, and distressed figure of the Volksbuch. "Der ewige Jude ist nicht nur gekleidet wie ein guter Bürgersmann seiner Zeit, er hat auch ihren rationalistischen Geist. Sein Blick ist nicht Demut, nicht Zerknirschung seine Gemütsstimmung. Wenn er von sich spricht, ist sein Ton leicht, banal."¹ He has assumed the role of a teacher of history, an intelligent, respected scholar.

Reichard's treatment of the Wandering Jew as a historian is interesting. The Jew appears as being completely unimpressed with the contemporary world. His description of seventeen centuries of world history can be described as perfunctory. He is more concerned with anecdotes and historical incidents of minor importance. Ahasverus is thus fascinated with the introduction of glass panes in Europe, but has little to say about the Reformation. Luther is mentioned in passing as an obstinate monk.

The Jew's account of history is interesting because he can be present wherever anything of interest occurs--with the exception of war, which he avoids. He jumps from land to land and people to people with no apparent plan.

Reichard gives his Wandering Jew an air of knowing understanding.² He is ready to criticize the follies of mankind throughout history, but, in a patronizing manner, points out the good which results. But the attempts at satire and critical observation carried out by the Jew are weak. Reichard's work serves, nevertheless, as an interesting superfi-

¹Soergel, p. 39.

²Anderson, The Legend, p. 143.

cial treatment of the Jew as a historian; the deeper significances of the Legend of the Wandering Jew are not developed.

Ahasverus makes another appearance as a teller of history in the work entitled Briefe des ewigen Juden Über die merkwürdigsten Begebenheiten seiner Zeit (1791-1801), by Wilhelm Friedrich Heller. This popular history appeared in three volumes, the first two in 1791 and the third in 1801.¹ The format of this work was a favorite literary device of the eighteenth century already seen in Letters Writ by a Turkish Spy--the use of a series of letters in exposition.

The Wandering Jew remains of the Jewish faith in this work, even though he regrets his shameful treatment of Christ. His letters are addressed mainly, therefore, to certain Rabbis who were living at the approximate times of the events which he describes.² The Jew relates various situations and events which have occurred in history and hopes to help humanity enjoy better times through the destruction of superstition surrounding such events.³ The Jew remains comfortably in the background as far as social comment is concerned and functions mainly as a scribe--in keeping with his assumed role as historian. "Dennoch hat man von ihm aus dem Werk keinen Eindruck irgendwelcher Art, ausser dass er das Sprachrohr der rationalistischen Zeittendenzen ist."⁴

During the eighteenth century in Germany there was a common say-

¹Anderson, The Legend, pp. 144-145.

²Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 48.

³Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 49.

⁴Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 49.

ing which stated, "Der läuft wie der ewige Jude." Anyone described in such a manner was thought to be an idle, lazy person who wandered around with no goals in life.¹ Ahasverus was the symbol of pointless existence. He was relatively unimportant as a person, and yet he had experienced more than anyone else living on the earth; he had observed most of the major historical events beginning with the death of Christ right up to the present.² So, although many authors could not build a plot nor elaborate to any great extent upon the person of Ahasverus, nevertheless they found him particularly useful as an observer of history. In this manner they were able to handle any number of given subjects from history and combine them by means of the Wandering Jew. In other words, Ahasverus became a literary device instead of a literary theme. He was chosen because of the convenience he provided as an assimilator of material. The major weakness of the Wandering Jew legend used thematically is apparent in this light. Because he is forced, after the details of his curse have been told, to talk about things he has seen instead of about himself, his value as a theme is weakened. The early works which employed Ahasverus as a historian, with little or no respect given to his observations, immediately indicated this weakness underlying the motif. However, these historical works functioned positively, too, in keeping the Legend of the Wandering Jew alive in literature. The Jew's

¹Soergel, p. 39. This saying was found by Soergel in Johann Goeze's Nützliches Allerley, I, p. 80, a source which I was unable to locate.

²George Anderson has compiled an interesting list of historical events which were deemed important enough to have been mentioned by the Wandering Jew. The number of events, taken from all treatments of the legend in which the Wanderer acts as historian, is impressive. Anderson points out that several important historical events were completely overlooked. See Anderson, The Legend, pp. 146-148.

role as historian in literature lost popularity and became rare in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It was not long before authors more artistically gifted were able to recognize and utilize Ahasverus as a valuable literary symbol.

CHAPTER V

AHASVERUS, A JEW

Anti-Semitic Interpretations

With the appearance of Ahasverus in the Volksbuch in 1602, the Jewish character took a step forward in European literature. Up to this time the Jew had been ridiculed, mocked, and generally disgraced in literature and on the stage.¹ A Jewish character had finally appeared in whom authors could find more admirable qualities. Ahasverus was nevertheless not completely exonerated from the role of a literary butt in his appearance in the Volksbuch. It has already been established that the author of the Volksbuch likely reported the Legend of the Wandering Jew because of its value as religious propaganda. Anti-Jewish sentiment continued to exist quite commonly among the people even though the Jews were allowed to exist in a relatively peaceful climate.² This sentiment exists in the Volksbuch too.

Ahasverus became a very popular character for the reading populace. This very fact is proof of the anti-Semitic sentiment which continued to flourish. Ahasverus, a converted Jew, appeared as a witness

¹H. R. S. van der Veen, Jewish Characters in Eighteenth Century English Fiction and Drama (Groningen and Batavia, 1935), pp. 93-94.

²Persecution of the Jews in Europe had reached its outward climax in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Even though they continued to live in virtual isolation in the big-city ghettos, nevertheless they were generally left alone because the Reformation had brought more urgent problems to Europe. It is evident, however, that anti-Semitic feelings were ever present. For more information see Bernard Lazare, Antisemitism, Its History and Causes (London, 1967), pp. 56-71.

to the New Testament and the teachings of Christ.¹ The author of the Volksbuch obviously was aware of the meaning such testimony would have. It would strengthen the testimonies of the already faithful and at the same time would strike a blow at the Jewish faith. That such subtle propaganda became so popular is indication of the antagonism generally felt towards the Jews.

A closer examination of some of the Volksbuch detail is useful too in exposing anti-Semitic tendencies prevalent in the early seventeenth century.

A detail which was completely new in the Volksbuch was the designation of Ahasverus as a shoemaker: "Das derselbige sich nun den Winter uber etlich Wochen lang daselbsten auffgehalten: und von sich auszugeben das er ein geborner Jud von Jerusalem / mit seinem Namen Ahasverus und seines Handtwercks ein Schuhmacher / . . . "² There has been considerable conjecture concerning the significance of this particular vocation.³ Leonard Neubaur believes that the author intended to

¹Converted Jews like Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469-1524) had contributed to violent outbreaks of anti-Semitism in Germany before. This type of anti-Jewish testimony certainly influenced public opinion against the Jews.

²George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 248.

³"Just shy the Wandering Jew has usually been portrayed as a former shoemaker has never been explained, except for the reasons a) that shoemakers are by tradition independent, lazy, improvident, defiant, and atheistical; and b) that there would be a fine irony in having a shoemaker wander forever and so wear out shoes with no possibility of repairing them--a professional torture, as it were. But at least one shoemaker used the Wandering Jew as an excuse for his own shortcomings. Henderson (note 27) reports an old shoemaker of Devonshire, who, when reproved for his shiftlessness, observed: 'Don't 'ee be hard on me. We shoemakers are a poor slobbering race, and so have been ever since the curse that

portray Ahasverus as a scornful figure. As proof that the vocation of cobbler was considered very low, Neubaur cites classical tradition. The works of Aristophanes, Plato, Martial and Juvenal refer to the shoemakers as contemptible persons.¹ Further, one of Burkhard Waldis' (ca. 1490-1556) fables tells of a tench which, being despised by all the other fish, was called by them a shoemaker.² To supply the German Wandering Jew with a scornful vocation was to ridicule the Jewish position in society. It seems likely that the author of the Volksbuch did this intentionally.

The physical description¹ of Ahasverus in the Volksbuch is demeaning. He is described as being tall, lean, and guant. The conspicuousness of these attributes conveys the miserable state of an abstemious, persecuted person. His clothes are threadbare, ragged, and shabby. His hair is shoulder length and his feet are hard and thick with horny skin. "Dieser Mann oder Jud / soll so dicke Fuszsolen haben / das mans gemessen / zweyer Zwerch Finger dick gewesen / gleich wie ein horn so hart wegen seines langes gehen unnd Reysen / . . . "³ The detailed description of Ahasver contained in the Volksbuch was not so apparent in

Jesus Christ laid on us.' 'And what was that?' asked his wife. 'Why,' he replied, 'when they were carrying Him to the Cross, they passed a shoemaker's bench and the man looked up and spat at Him; and the Lord turned and said, 'A poor slobbering fellow shalt thou be and all shoemakers after thee, for what thou hast done to me.' " Quoted from a footnote: George K. Anderson, "Popular Survivals of the Wandering Jew in England," JEGP, XLVI (1947), 372.

¹ Leonard Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte der Sage vom ewigen Juden," Zeitschrift des Vereins für Volkskunde, XXII (1912), 42-43. --hereafter cited as Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte."

² Neubaur, "Zur Geschichte," p. 43. The original source remained inaccessible to me.

³ Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 250.

in the early account by Roger of Wendover and Matthew Paris. The author no doubt intended to make the Jew a ridiculous figure as representative of his race.¹

Another addition to the account of the Wandering Jew as found in the Volksbuch is the frequency of mention of the Wanderer's race. Wendover and Paris were not as concerned with the transgressions of the Jewish race. The author of the Volksbuch did not want his readers to forget what the Jewish people had done to the Saviour. "Ein neuer Zug ist es auch, dass das Judentum des Sünders so stark betont wird im Volksbuch. Hierdurch neigt der Stoff etwas zu antisemitischer Tendenz, . . . So tritt Ahasver in gewissem Sinne neben Judas, der in mittelalterlichen Literatur oft Symbol des Judenhasses war."² Several editions of the Volksbuch which followed the original also included accounts of the punishments which the various tribes of Israel have undergone because of the Crucifixion of Christ.³

Even though the enmity towards the Jews is not overwhelming in the Volksbuch, it nonetheless exists. There can be little doubt that the Legend of the Wandering Jew owes much of its popularity to the anti-Semitic views, subtle as they may have been, which were present in the original edition. It should be noted that very little was changed

¹ Many later editions of the Volksbuch contained woodcuts portraying the Wandering Jew. His abnormal appearance was usually emphasized. A mid-nineteenth century artist's concept appears in The Devil and the Jews by Joshua Trachtenberg, p. 16.

² Werner Zirus, Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, Palaestra, CLXII (Leipzig, 1928), pp. 12-13.

³ George K. Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew (Providence, 1965), p. 52.

in the subsequent editions of the Volksbuch, " . . . except for a gradual heightening of anti-Jewish tension."¹

In some of the earliest accounts of the Legend of the Wandering Jew in literature the inclinations towards anti-Jewish sentiment are often discernable. In the old English ballad previously cited (see pp. 27-28), "The Wandering Jew, or the Shooemaker of Jerusalem," published in the first half of the seventeenth century, adverse opinion of the Jewish race is apparent. The story of the Crucifixion is retold in light of the Wandering Jew's story and the antagonism towards the Jews is constant throughout:

The wicked Jews with scoffs and scorns, did daily him molest,

 When they had crown'd his head with thorns, and scourg'd him
 with disgrace;
 In scornful sort they led him forth unto his dying place;

 Yet not one gentle heart was there that pity'd this his Wrong.
 Both old and young reviled him, as thro' the streets he went;
 And nothing found but churlish taunts, by everyone's consent.

Ill-feeling towards the Jews is equally evident in the refrain which followed each quatrain:

Repent therefore, O England! Repent while you have space;
 And do not (like the wicked Jews) despise God's proffered Grace.²

The anti-Jewish sentiment expressed in this ballad was probably inherited from one of the editions of the Volksbuch, after which the ballad

¹Anderson, The Legend, p. 53.

²The Roxburghe Ballads, ed. J. Woodfall Ebsworth, VI (Hertford, 1886; reprint New York, 1966), 693.

was patterned. There was in fact very little motivation for outright antagonism towards the Jews in England at that time, because the Jews had been banned from England since Edward I so decreed in 1291. The Jews were soon to be allowed admittance into England under Oliver Cromwell in 1656.¹

In May, 1797, a play was introduced to the English stage entitled, "The Wandering Jew, or Love's Masquerade." The author of the drama was Andrew Franklin. Even though a new movement was current at this time which admonished better treatment of the Jews on the stage,² Franklin, like many of his contemporaries, did not appear to be much influenced by it.

In "Love's Masquerade," the Wandering Jew is employed for farcical purposes only. The Jew is a comical figure in the play.³

The theme of Franklin's drama is improbable, but amusing. Sir Solomon Swallow has decided to marry his daughter Lydia to the oldest interested party, presumably because he is disgusted with the young men seeking his daughter's hand. Major Atal, the young man most favored by Lydia, decides to disguise himself as the Wandering Jew. With this plot in mind, he has a paragraph published in the local newspaper announcing

¹ Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 17.

² van der Veen, p. 248.

³ Franklin's play apparently influenced an anonymous German narrative which was published in Leipzig in 1800. This story was a comedy too, in which a disguise of the hero as the Wandering Jew led to the eventual marriage of the characters concerned. Not much else is significant in the story, except that the Wandering Jew was again portrayed as a clown. See Johann Prost, Die Sage vom ewigen Juden in der neueren deutschen Literatur (Leipzig, 1905), p. 26.

the Wandering Jew's presence in London, accompanied by an aged servant. Sir Solomon reads the announcement and resolves to invite the two elderly gentlemen to his home.

The two "ancients" proceed to relate their experiences throughout the years, these being extremely absurd and consequently providing the comedy. The two "Jews" are eventually unmasked but Sir Solomon allows the desired engagement to take place.¹

The Wandering Jew made his dramatic debut in England as a buffoon. The obvious anti-Jewish sentiments harbored by Franklin are apparent in another scene from the play. In Act II, scene 3, Lady Swallow tells of an auction which she attended. Several others were in attendance, including a marquis and two wealthy Jewish connoisseurs. As a picture was being auctioned, an argument broke out during which the Jews became involved in fisticuffs with other participants of the auction. "While they were employed in knocking each other down," says Lady Swallow, "the auctioneer, merely to punish them all for their ill manners, knocked down the picture to me."²

In Germany, Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano published "Des Knaben Wunderhorn" in 1806-1808. They included in this collection of verse one poem which referred to the Wandering Jew and which definitely contains anti-Semitic feeling. "Das Leiden des Herren" relates in verse the tale of the Crucifixion, beginning with Christ's betrayal in the Garden of Gethsemane, and ending with the moment of death on the cross.

¹van der Veen, pp. 246-248.

²van der Veen, p. 248.

The poem emphasizes the Jews' maltreatment of Christ in much the same manner as the English song already cited and inserts briefly the story of the Wandering Jew. The obviously antagonistic feeling towards the Jews expressed in this poem is apparent in the following verses:

Sehr fälschlich er ihn hinterging,
 Verkaufte seinen Gott und Herrn,
 Das sahen die Juden herrlich gern.
 Sie gingen in den Garten hin
 Mit zornigem und bösem Sinn,
 Mit Spiess und Stangen die lose Rott,
 Gefangen nahmen unsern Gott.
 Sie führten ihn ins Richters Haus
 Mit scharfen Striemen wieder 'raus;
 Gegeisselt und mit Dorn gekrönt,
 Ach Jesu! wurdest du verhöhnt.
 Ein scharfes Urtheil sprachen sie,
 Indem der ganze Haufe schrie:
 "Nur weg, nur weg, nach Golgatha
 Und schlägt ihn an das Kreuze da!"

 Erschöpft will er ruhen aus
 Vor eines reichen Juden Haus;
 Der Jude stiess ihn spottend weg,
 Er blickt ihn an, geht seinen Weg.
 Herr Jesus schwieg, doch Gott der bannt
 Den Juden, dass er zieht durchs Land,
 Und kann nicht sterben nimmermehr,
 Und wandert immer hin und her.

 Da kam ein Jud und Hüllenbrand,
 Ein Speer führt er in seiner Hand,
 Gab damit Jesu einen Stoss,
 Dass Blut und Wasser daraus floss.¹

The anti-Semitism expressed by the author of this poem is confined to a religious interpretation, i.e. the Jews are wicked because they killed the Saviour.

Even though Arnim and Brentano are not the authors of this poem,

¹Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, "Das Leiden des Herren," Des Knaben Wunderhorn (Heidelberg, 1806-1808; reprint Leipzig, n.d.), pp. 97-99.

nevertheless, according to Karl Bode, Arnim reworked the original poem. The anti-Semitic tendencies are evident in the original verse, but Arnim added verses six, seven, and eight to the poem. These verses contain the reference to the Legend of the Wandering Jew. Bode finds the addition of these verses by Arnim to be unfortunate, ". . . weil sie den Zusammenhang auf unverständliche Weise stören und auch in der Form zu wünschen übrig lassen."¹

Arnim refers to the Wandering Jew in his "Halle und Jerusalem" (see pp. 31-32). Even though Arnim is not blatant in his expression of anti-Semitism in connection with the Wandering Jew in his play or in these added verses, the fact that he would add verses alluding to the legend to a poem which already contains anti-Jewish tendencies would indicate that he concurred, at least in part, with the antagonistic sentiment already expressed.

Even though anti-Semitic allusions were infrequent and usually subtle in the earliest publications dealing with the Legend of the Wandering Jew, nevertheless an antagonistic attitude towards the Jewish race was evident. This antagonism appears to have decreased rather than increased as the end of the eighteenth century approached, however. The French Revolution was instrumental in bestowing status and rights as citizens upon European Jews.² It is not surprising, therefore, that Ahasverus did not become an undisguised weapon of an anti-Semitic movement, but rather became a symbol of the Jewish race as a whole.

¹Karl Bode, Die Bearbeitung der Vorlagen in Des Knaben Wunderhorn, Palaestra, LXXVI (Berlin, 1909), p. 511.

²Lazare, p. 83.

Consequently there are relatively few accounts of the legend which are outright expressions of anti-Jewish sentiment--the allusions to Ahasverus' Judaism are usually subtle.¹

Ahasverus, Representative of the Jewish Race

The obvious parallels between Ahasverus and the Jewish race were recognized at an early date in the Legend of the Wandering Jew's literary history. The Jews were scattered throughout the world, an ancient and proud race without a homeland. They were constantly persecuted and forced to move on. In the Christian world, persecution of the Jews existed purportedly because of their maltreatment of Christ. Ahasverus too had maltreated the Lord and was condemned to a life of eternal wandering, unable to call anywhere home. In 1714, Johann Jakob Schudt (1664-1722), in his Jüdische Merkwürdigkeiten, stated: ". . . dieser umlauffende Jude sey nicht eine einzeln Person, sondern das gantze Jüdische nach der Creutzigung Christi in alle Welt zerstreute, umher-

¹The Wandering Jew continued to be associated with anti-Semitism, however. He lent his reputation to a variety of works which are concerned with anti-Semitism. In 1821, Ludwig Börne (1786-1837), a prominent Jewish scholar, reviewed an anti-Semitic work par excellence by Dr. Ludolf Holst entitled, Judentum in allen dessen Teilen, aus einem staatswissenschaftlichen Standpunkt betrachtet (1821). Börne's review had very little to do with the Wandering Jew. It was a scathingly critical review of the book and anti-Semitism in Germany. He entitled his review "Der ewige Jude," because the problem of anti-Semitism seemed to him to never cease. See Ludwig Börne, "Der ewige Jude," Sämtliche Schriften, ed. Inge and Peter Rippmann, II (Darmstadt, 1964), 494-538.

The Wandering Jew appears likewise in the title of a contemporary history of anti-Semitism entitled Der ewige Jude (1965). Again the Wanderer has a very minor role in the book, but his reputation is obviously associated with persecution of the Jewish race. See Helmut Andics, Der ewige Jude (Wien, 1965).

schweifende und nach Christi Zeugniß biss an den jüngsten Tag bleibende Volck."¹

Even though the nineteenth century appeared promising to the Jews of Europe, their situation was, nevertheless, less than comfortable. In many population centers the Jews were still required to live in ghettos; often they were not allowed to pursue certain professions. They continued to gain ground in society, however, and many Jews became increasingly wealthy. They began to produce their own poets, men like Ludwig Börne and Heinrich Heine. The Jewish influence on European society became increasingly evident.²

As Ahasverus developed into a popular artistic literary figure, the indeterminate plight of the Jews became increasingly ominous. It is no wonder, therefore, that authors began to recognize the eternal wanderer as a symbol of the Jewish people:

Somit gibt die Sage ein Bild vom Jüdischen Volk in seinem Verhältniss zum Christenthum überhaupt. Die Juden haben diesen steifen Nacken des Unglaubens, wie Ahasverus. Selbst haben sie das Blut des Gottmenschen über sich herabgerufen. Ohne Heimath wandern sie umher, eine Mahnung für alle Völker, nicht zu sein, wie sie. Sie wissen die neue Offenbarung des uralten Vaters, aber sie wollen die Erscheinung seines Wesens in der Wirklichkeit des Menschensohnes nicht anerkennen. Zerstreuet in alle Welt, von den anderen Nationen nicht selten verfolgt, sind sie dennoch vom zähesten Leben begünstigt. Ihre irdische Unsterblichkeit wird nicht eher aufhören, als bis ihre geistige anfängt, welche nirgends anders als im christlichen Glauben da ist, den sie annehmen müssen, wie Ahasverus. Dann wird das Unstete ihres Daseins aufhören, weil sie als Christen mit den übrigen Völkern der Erde verschmelzen und das Starre ihrer inneren

¹Quoted in Leonard Neubaur, Die Sage vom ewigen Juden, 2nd. ed. (Leipzig, 1893), p. 22. This is probably the first recorded indication that Ahasverus will come to symbolize the Jewish race.

²Albert Soergel, Ahasver-Dichtungen seit Goethe (Leipzig, 1905), p. 58.

Absonderung verlieren werden.¹

The finest early literary expression portraying Ahasverus as a symbol of the Jewish race is found in Berthold Auerbach's (1812-1881) short novel, Spinoza, Ein Denkerleben (1837). Ahasverus is a minor character in this work, which treats the life of the seventeenth century Jewish philosopher Spinoza. Ahasverus does not appear until the end of the story. At this point in his life, Spinoza is being ostracized by his Jewish contemporaries because of his revolutionary ideas.

During the night Ahasverus appears to Spinoza and tells him of his fate as a wanderer. Auerbach correlates Ahasverus' fate with the fate of the Jewish people when he says: " . . . es war ein Kuss des sterbenden Ahasverus, der auf sich trug das Schicksal Israels, welches Jesus Christus an das Kreuz geschlagen."² Ahasverus describes his history and fate to Spinoza. Because of the allusions to the Jewish people and their doom, Ahasverus' complete speech is worthwhile to this study:

Kennst du mich wohl, du mein Sohn, an dem ich Wohlgefallen finde? Schon mehr denn sechzehnhundert Mal sah ich die Sonne ihren Kreislauf vollenden, seit dem Tage, da das Wehe über mein Haupt gekommen. Ich stand unter meiner Thür und hatte mein Kind auf dem Arme, da brachten sie den

¹Karl Rosenkranz, Geschichte der Deutschen Poesie im Mittelalter (Halle, 1830), pp. 423-424. Rosenkranz expresses the general opinion of the Jews, harbored by German Christians in the first half of the nineteenth century. He recognizes the literary significance of Ahasverus as a symbol of his own race. He also sees him as a pattern which all Jews must follow to gain release from their persecutions. Once the Jews accept Christ as the Saviour, they will be assimilated into the other races of the world--as if the Jews should consider that a privilege!

²Berthold Auerbach, "Spinoza, Ein Denkerleben," Gesammelte Schriften, XI (Leipzig, 1837; rev. ed., Stuttgart, 1864), 232.

Jesus, Sohn des Joseph und der Maria von Nazareth, der sich unsern Messias nannte; ich hasste ihn, denn wir liebten den Boden und er wies uns an seinen Himmel; wir wollten ein Schwert und er lehrte uns das fremde Joch lieben: er war unser Messias nicht. Als er nun an der Schwelle meines Hauses ausruhen wollte, da trat ich ihn mit dem Fusse und stiess ihn weg; er aber sprach: komm mit mir, dein Fuss der mich getreten, soll keine Ruhe finden, bis zu dem Tage, da ich wiederkehren und mein Reich auf Erden gründen werde. Das Kind entfiel meinen Händen, ich folgte ihm, ich sah ihn den Kreuzestod sterben; ich sah mein Haus, sah meine Kinder nicht mehr, sie wurden zerstreut wie Spreu von dem Winde oder wurden vom Schwerte gefressen. Unstätt und flüchtig wie Kain wanderte ich durch Wald und Feld, über Ströme und Berge; die Blume verschloss ihren Kelch vor meinem Auge, das Gras seufzte, wenn mein Fuss sich ihm nahte; die Vögel verstummten in den Lüften, und der ausgehungerte Löwe, der brüllend herbeikam, wich scheu zurück, wenn er mich erblickte. Doch die wilden Thiere, sie waren noch barmherzig und liebevoll, so ich die ansah, die meines Geschlechtes sind. Ich wanderte durch Städte und Länder: sie tränkten mich mit Wermuth und sättigten mich mit Galle, sie gossen Gift in meine Wunden und betteten mich auf Dornen; und wenn ich mein Haupt ruhig niederlegen wollte, machten sie den Boden unter mir erzittern, und wenn ich meine Klagen erheben wollte, verstopften sie mir den Mund mit feurigen Kohlen. An jedem Orte, dahin ich meine Schritte förderte, fassten sie mich bei den Haaren, sammelten Holz auf einen Haufen und schleuderten mich in die Flamme; aber Jehovah, der Gott Israels, dessen ewiges Gesetz ich auf dem Herzen trage, sendete seinen Engel. Und ob auch die Flammen ihre gierigen Zungen nach mir ausstreckten, Er errettete mich; und ob sie auch in Strömen mein Blut vergossen, Er erhob mich und belebte mich neu; und ob sie auch in dunkle Nacht mich hüllten, sein Licht leuchtete und Helle ward um mich her; und ob sie auch in Grabesduft und Moder mich versenkten, sein Odem wehete und neues Leben haucht' er mir ein. Oft frug ich ihn: wann wird es enden, o Herr! wann wirst du dich mein erbarmen, wann mich wieder freundlich aufnehmen vor deinem Angesichte? Wann wirst du Balsam giesen in meine Wunden, wann lindern meine Qualen, wann mich Ruhe finden lassen? Wann wirst du Hass in Liebe wandeln, dass ich aufhöre zu sein ein Gräucl und das Ziel des Spottes allen Nationen? Was soll mir ein ewiges Sterben ohne Tod, ein ewiger Tod ohne Leben? Siehe, Geschlecht auf Geschlecht sah ich aufgehen und verwelken wie das Gras des Feldes, Königreiche sah ich erstehen und in Staub zerfliegen vor dem Hauche deines Mundes. Alles verwest und gebiert sich neu, nur ich allein hänge wie der Tropfen am Eimer, der im Winde zittert und doch nicht fallen mag. Wo des Eises Bande die Erde ewig gefesselt halten, dort stand ich, und Arabiens heisser Sand brannte mir an der Sohle; und nirgends, nirgends ein Land, wo ich säen und ernten, wo ich ein Grab finden kann. Jerusalem, die herrliche, liegt in Trümmern, wann wirst du sie aufbauen? wann uns zurückführen? Siehe, ich spreche zum Morgen: o dass es Abend, und zum Abend, o dass es Morgen würde. Siehe, der Kummer ist mein Genosse, Schmach und Elend sind meine Gespielen, ich habe sie lieb gewonnen; gieb mir Thränen, Thränen gieb mir, dass ich weinen kann ob meines Drangsals; willst du es nicht, zieh' deine Hand ab von mir, lass meine Feinde treffen das Herz meiner Seele, lass mich sterben,

sterben lass mich.--Siehe, ich habe mich in Hass gehüllet, lass mich Rache erleben an meinen Feinden, zehnfach wälze auf ihr Haupt, was sie über mich gesendet; sprich zu dem Donner, dass er sie erzittern mache, befiehl dem Blitz, dass er ihr Mark fresse, oder gieb mir ein Schwert, ein Schwert gieb mir, dass ich mich bade in ihrem Blute-- --

Oder soll sie kommen die Zeit, da Lieb' und Treue sich begegnen, Gerechtigkeit und Friede sich küssen, Wahrheit aus der Erde sprosst, Gerechtigkeit vom Himmel schaut?

Siehe mein Sohn, das war meine Klage, das war mein Verzweifeln, das war mein Hoffen. Du bist gekommen zu werden ein Erlöser der Menschheit, auch mich wirst du erlösen. Die deines Stammes sind, sie haben dich verstossen, sie haben dir nach dem Leben getrachtet; die nicht deines Stammes sind, sie haben dich betrogen, sie haben dir deine süssesten Gefühle vergällt; du kennest keinen Groll, du lohnest ihnen mit der Wahrheit.¹

Ahasverus is weary of the persecution which he, in name of the Jewish people, has suffered. He wants the curse of eternal suffering imposed upon the Jews to come to an end. He finds in Spinoza the "liberator of humanity." Auerbach, Jewish himself, looks forward to the physical and spiritual rebuilding of Jerusalem.

Even though Ahasverus' emerging value in the nineteenth century as a symbol of the Jews is nowhere better expressed, this particular incident appears at first somewhat contradictory. Throughout Auerbach's novel, Spinoza is described as a revolutionary heretic to the Jewish faith and has been ceremoniously excommunicated. But Ahasverus, who is most strict in his service of Jehova, as symbolized by the silver clasp containing the law of Jehova which he carries, appears and confers with a kiss the role of liberator of mankind upon Spinoza. The confusion and uncertainty of the young Jewish intellectuals which probably motivated Auerbach in this seemingly contradictory passage is evident. Even though the ancient laws represented by Ahasverus were still to be res-

¹Auerbach, pp. 229-232.

pected, nevertheless, the young Jewish scholar looked forward to a rebuilding of the Jewish world and was nearly ready to use new and revolutionary means, as represented by Spinoza, to achieve his aims.

Gustav Pfizer (1807-1890) wrote a poem, "Der ewige Jude," (1831) which emphasizes the nationality of the Wandering Jew. Ahasverus lives and suffers with his people in Pfizer's poem. He meditates seriously the plight of the Jews, their suffering and misery. He hopes to assume as much of their burden as possible, thereby symbolizing the total suffering of the Jews. He is unable to die, but nevertheless is one of them. He believes in a prosperous future for his people.¹

The corresponding parallels extant in Ahasverus' life and in the history of the Jewish race were the reasons behind the Wanderer's symbolic portrayal of them. But as the position of the Jewish people in society began to improve, Ahasverus declined in popularity as an artistic expression of the plight of only one race. Instead he developed into a symbol of all humanity.

After an outbreak of anti-Semitism in the late nineteenth century, Ahasverus was again associated frequently with Jewry. Several plays such as Ahasverus (1893) by Herman Heyerman and The Wandering Jew (ca. 1899) by Isaac M. Wise portrayed Ahasverus as the embodiment of the Jewish nation, a nation constantly persecuted by Christians and forced to move on.²

In a poem by Richard Dehmel (1863-1920), "Ein Heine Denkmal" (1901), in which a ruler describes to a sculptor the statue of Heinrich Heine

¹Soergel, p. 63.

²Anderson, The Legend, pp. 294-295.

which he wishes erected, Ahasverus appears as the homeless wanderer seeking consolation:

Über die finstern Furchen der Nordsee,
Über die fliehenden Schäume her
sieht er ihn kommen,
seinen Ahnherrn Ahasver:
er sucht den Messias.
Der Wind jagt seinen Bart,
morgendlich funkelt ein Strand;
seit Jahrtausenden so, der arme Alte,
sucht er den Tod.¹

Ahasver spies Heine and falls at his feet, convinced he has found the resurrected Lord of Israel:

Und Ahasver schreit auf,
dass sein Schrei die Möwen vor ihm erschreckt
und ans Land stürzt er und bricht zusammen,
und Jahrtausende schluchzen
dem erstaunten Michel ins dumme Herz:
Mein Heiland Du,
mein heimlich²erstandener
Herr Israels!

In this poem, Heine is praised as the Lord and Saviour of Israel. He is recognized in this role by the admiring Jewish people, who in turn are symbolized by the most ancient and wise Jew of them all--Ahasverus.

The German poet, Julius Sturm (1816-1896), wrote a short poem entitled "Ahasver," which was not published until 1907. Ahasverus is the symbol of a miserable restless people who are constantly seeking fulfillment--the Jews. Until they accept Christ as the Son of God, they

¹Richard Dehmel, "Ein Heine Denkmal," Gesammelte Werke, II (Berlin, 1907), 178.

²Dehmel, pp. 178-179.

will never achieve their goal, the same attitude expressed by Karl Rosenkranz in 1830 (see pp. 62-63).

Erfüllt ist Gottes dreuend Wort
Und Juda irrt durch Land und Meer
Und sucht nach einem Friedensport,
Ein ruheloser Ahasver.

Doch nimmer winkt ihm süsse Rast
In Gottes gnadenreicher Hut,
Bevor er nicht das Kreuz umfasst
Und in dem Frieden Christi ruht.¹

An American Jew, Israel Zangwill, wrote three modern novels depicting Jewish life in America. His second novel, The Grandchildren of the Ghetto (1894), a sequel to his first, Children of the Ghetto (1892), contains a quote by Esther Ansell, one of the main characters, which designates the Jewish race as Wandering Jews. Esther is defending the traditional Jewish way of life before Sidney Graham, a Jew by birth, but not by choice:

'Not at all,' said Esther. 'If you knew more of our history, you would see it is quite normal. We were always hankering after the gods of the heathen, and we always loved magnificence--remember our Temples. In every land we have produced great merchants and rulers, prime ministers, viziers, nobles. We built castles in Spain (solid ones) and palaces in Venice. We have had saints and sinners, free-livers and ascetics, martyrs and money-lenders. "Polarity" Graetz call the self-contradiction which runs through our history. I figure the Jew as the eldest-born of Time, touching the Creation and reaching forward into the Future, the true blasé of the universe--the Wandering Jew who has been everywhere, seen everything, done everyting, led everything, thought everything, and --suffered everything.'²

It is obvious that Zangwill too has recognized the parallelisms of the

¹Julius Sturm, "Ahasver," in "Ein Beitrag zur Ahasver-Literatur," by Hermann Krüger-Westend, Euphorion, XIV (1907), 617.

²Israel Zangwill, The Grandchildren of the Ghetto (London, 1894), p. 97.

Legend of the Wandering Jew and the lot of the Jewish people.

Even though the symbolic significance of Ahasverus as representative of the Jewish race was natural, nevertheless it was not the most popular use of the Wandering Jew theme in literature. If the Wanderer could represent one small segment of society which was downtrodden, why could he not represent all of humanity relegated to a life of toil and suffering? This did in fact become the role most often assigned to the weary Ahasverus. Nevertheless, it appears that the Wandering Jew's relationship with his own race will never entirely disappear.

Mrs. Ethelreda Lewis (+1946), an English writer known as the editor of the life narrative of Alfred Aloysius Horn, published under the title Trader Horn (1927), summed up the relationship of Ahasverus and the Jews in a short statement attributed to Horn:

Said he was looking for a place where the Jews could rest. . . . Been walking down Africa and couldn't find a spot big enough to hold their commercial notions.

"This would do for me," he says, "but I must find a place where they can rest" "Poor feller. Rest and the Jew've been strangers from immemorial times. Isn't every Jew a Wandering Jew?"¹

¹Alfred Aloysius Horn, pseud. of Ethelreda Lewis, "The Wandering Jew and Other Mystical Matters," London Mercury, XX (1929), 16.

CHAPTER VI
THE TRIALS OF AHASVERUS

Symbolic of Weltschmerz

As the Legend of the Wandering Jew became increasingly popular as a literary theme in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the volume of self-pity, remorse and complaining evident in connection with legend was enormous. In nearly all of the original accounts of the Jew's adventures, the description of his suffering is prominent.

Ahasverus' state of sorrow is especially poignant because of the curse of unending life as expressed in the Volksbuch version of the legend, the source for most later literary accounts of the theme. The older sources of the legend had designated a goal towards which Ahasverus could strive, namely the Second Coming of Christ. But in the Volksbuch Christ only says: "Ich will stehen und ruhen / du aber soll gehen."¹ There is no indication how long the Jew must wander. Therefore Ahasverus complains that, "Was nun Gott mit jme für habe / . . . sey jm unwissent / seines theils möchte leiden / das jn Gott ausz diesem Jamerthal zu ruhe abforderte."² This longing for death at an unspecified time to rescue him from this world is the first expression of the misery of life in conjunction with the Legend of the Wandering Jew.³

¹George K. Anderson, "The Wandering Jew Returns to England," JEGP, XLIII (1946), 249.

²Anderson, "The Wandering Jew," p. 249.

³Werner Zirus, Der ewige Jude in der Dichtung, vornehmlich in der englischen und deutschen, Palaestra, CLXII (Leipzig, 1928), p. 13.

The poetic expression of an abnormal sensitivity to the misery of existence has been defined as Weltschmerz.¹ Ahasverus definitely expresses sorrow concerning his mortal existence and is therefore an appropriate example of the Weltschmerz concept, a concept which became popular during the romantic period of German literature.

Schubart's poem, "Der ewige Jude," referred to earlier in this study (see pp. 36-37), introduced Ahasverus in light of Weltschmerz and set the pattern which was used by many later writers of Ahasverus lyric:

"Aber ich Verworfenner, / Ich kann nicht sterben--Ach! das furchtbarste Gericht / Hängt schreckenbrüllend ewig Über mir. . . . Nicht ruhen können nach des Leibes Mühen!"² The theme throughout Schubart's poem is Ahasverus' inability to die even though he pursues death in every form. His distaste for life, combined with his unfulfilled death wish, creates an impressive feeling of Weltschmerz. The feeling of absolute misery in a worldly existence did not go unnoticed by the other authors of the period. Ahasverus became a symbolic representative of the sentimentally pessimistic world.

William Wordsworth (1770-1850), the well-known English poet, wrote a short poem entitled "The Song for the Wandering Jew" (1800), in which he expresses the sentimental yearnings of the poet for fulfillment. Contrasting the harmonious components of nature in their peaceful repose with the Wandering Jew's inability to find soothing rest, Wordsworth

¹Wilhelm Alfred Braun, Types of Weltschmerz in German Poetry (London, 1905), p. 1.

²Christian Friedrich Daniel Schubart, "Der ewige Jude," Schubarts Werke in einem Band (Berlin and Weimar, 1965), pp. 299-301.

expresses his personal Weltschmerz as a poet. As time moves on, his toils and trials increase and yet, he is never any closer to personal fulfillment:

Though the torrents from their fountains
Roar down many a craggy steep,
Yet they find among the mountains
Resting-places calm and deep.

Clouds that love through air to hasten,
Ere the storm its fury stills,
Helmet-like themselves will fasten
On the heads of towering hills.

What, if through the frozen centre
Of the Alps the Chamois bound,
Yet he has a home to enter
In some nook of chosen ground:

And the Sea-horse, though the ocean
Yield him no domestic cave,
Slumbers without sense of motion,
Couched upon the rocking wave.

If on windy days the Raven
Gambol like a dancing skiff,
Not the less she loves her haven
In the bosom of the cliff.

The fleet Ostrich, till day closes,
Vagrant over desert sands,
Brooding on her eggs reposes
When chill night that care demands.

Day and night my toils redouble,
Never nearer to the goal;
Night and day, I feel the trouble
Of the Wanderer in my soul.¹

The sorrows of life depress the poet. He is ever aware of his inability to find peace and rest--just like the Wandering Jew.

Weltschmerz played an important role among German authors in their

¹The Poetical Works of William Wordsworth in Six Volumes, II (London, 1864), 44-45.

treatment of the Legend of the Wandering Jew. The poet Wilhelm Müller (1794-1827) wrote "Der ewige Jude" (1823) in the same form as Wordsworth's poem mentioned above. In his poem, Müller, like Wordsworth, stressed Ahasverus' inability to find rest by contrasting his situation with the elements of nature. The Wanderer is resigned here, too, to his unending life of wandering. There is none of the rebellion nor fury which was dominant in Schubart's poem. Melancholy and depression saturate the verse:

Ich wandre sonder Rast und Ruh',
 Mein Weg führt keinem Ziele zu;
 Fremd bin ich in jedwedem Land,
 Und Überall doch wohlbekannt.

Tief in dem Herzen klingt ein Wort,
 Das treibt mich fort von Ort zu Ort;
 Ich spräch's nicht aus, nicht laut, nicht leis',
 Sollt' ew'ge Ruh' auch sein der Preis.

Es wärmt mich nicht der Sonne Licht,
 Des Abends Thau, er kühlt mich nicht;
 Ein lauer Nebel hüllt mich ein
 In ewig gleichen Dämmerchein.

. 1

Müller ends his poem with a request from Ahasverus to the reader--before going to sleep, pray for Ahasverus that he might gain an hour's rest. Müller combines a hint of religion with his worldly despair.

The poem, "Ahasver, der ewige Jude" (1832), by Nikolaus Lenau, referred to earlier in this study (see pp. 37-38), is an outstanding example of Ahasverus' misery as a mortal.

Lenau wrote this poem while on a tour in the United States. The

¹Wilhelm Müller, "Der ewige Jude," Deutsche Literatur Denkmale, CXXXVII (Berlin, 1906), 136.

poem appeared in a collection of his poems entitled "Heidebildern," in 1833. Many scholars consider Lenau one of the best German poets of Weltschmerz.¹ This particular poem is an outstanding example of Lenau's talent.

A young shepherd boy lies dead on a bier. Mourners attend the dead youth. Ahasverus enters the group of mourners and approaches the body, his eyes glowing and his countenance weather-worn like old stone. He tells the mourners not to weep and praises death as the liberator from monotonous life. As he recognizes the likeness of Christ on the coffin, Ahasverus sheds tears and relates his various suicide attempts.² As Ahasverus turns unsatisfied away from the dead boy and strides away, the shepherds cross themselves and tremble.

Ahasverus expresses himself eloquently in his wish for death:

O süßer Schlaf! o süßer Todeschlaf!
 Könnt ich mich rastend in die Grube schmiegen!

 Wie tief behaglich ist die Todesmusse!
 War ich geklettert auf die Felsenmauer,
 Wo nichts gedeiht als süßer Todesschauer,
 Und rief ich weinend, wütend abgrundwärts:
 "O Mutter Erde, dein verlornen Sohn!
 Reiss mich zerschmetternd an dein steinern Herz!"³

Ahasverus is obviously miserable. His inability to die is dramatically stated in this poem, much as it was in Schubart's. He is no longer de-

¹Werner Zirus, Der Ewige Jude, p. 86.

²This is the only outside influence in Lenau's poem--a paraphrase of Schubart's poem, "Der ewige Jude," (see pp. 36-37). Lenau's version is done with more passion and force, however.

³Nikolaus Lenau, "Ahasver, der ewige Jude," Sämtliche Werke und Briefe in 6 Bänden, ed. Eduard Castle, I (Leipzig, 1910), 77-78.

fiant; he has resolved himself to live, however pitifully, with his curse. His abject sorrow in an unending and bitter world is overwhelming.

Even though the most popular symbolic art form of the Legend of the Wandering Jew in the nineteenth century is the Wandering Jew as a symbol of humanity, nevertheless Weltschmerz continued to be expressed until the turn of the century.

Adolf Friedrich von Schack's (1815-1894) poem, "Der ewige Wanderer" (1866), concentrated on the bitter, miserable existence which is Ahasverus' way of life. As the world and universe disintegrate and pass away, the Wandering Jew continues to live--still bemoaning his fate. The passing of the universe does not end his suffering, which mirrors the earthly trials of all humanity:

O Bild der Menschheit, Bild der Gramerkornen,
Die ewig seufzt ums Glück der Ungeborenen,
Doch nie dem Fluch entrinnt, der sie ergreift
Und sie als Opfer mit den beiden Schergen,
Geburt und Tod, auf Wiegen und auf Särgen
Von Dasein fort zu Dasein schleift!¹

Even though Weltschmerz and the agony of mortal existence are so important in the development of the literary form of the legend, nevertheless, some authors relieve Ahasverus of his misery. In much the same fashion as early reworkers of the legend offered Ahasverus religious redemption from his misery through death, so too did later authors free him from his Weltschmerz. In one such poem, Ahasverus has become a lover of earth, the beauties of a garden on an island in the Mediterranean Sea expressing for him the most wonderful place in the universe:

¹ Adolf Friedrich von Schack, "Der ewige Wanderer," Gesammelte Werke, II (Stuttgart, 1897), 390.

Die Welt, ich habe sie durchmessen,
 doch farblos schien mir Luft und Land;
 nur ein Bild hab ich nie vergessen,
 nur eins ist wert, dass es entstand
 Das ist die Zukunft der Verklärten,
 das ist des Meergotts grünes Schloss,
 das sind die wunderbaren Gärten,
 die Gärten des Okeanos!

Ich weiss, du bist ein deutscher Dichter,
 und ewig ruhlos bist du auch,
 wir sind zwei ähnliche Gesichter
 und um uns weht der gleiche Hauch.
 Doch komm, der Kummer, den wir nährten,
 wankt wie ein tönerner Koloss,
 wenn wir uns tummeln durch die Gärten,
 die Gärten des Okeanos!

. 1

Arno Holz (1863-1929) offered the Wanderer reprieve from his worldly woes in an effort to identify with him. A love of life and the beauties of nature are new feelings for the ancient Jew. Such attempts to absolve the Wandering Jew from worldly suffering are relatively rare in literature.

Because the Wandering Jew was such a suitable vehicle for the expression of Weltschmerz in the early part of the nineteenth century, it is not difficult to comprehend the next significant step in his development as a literary theme.

Symbolic of all Humanity

The sufferings of Ahasverus became symbolic of the suffering of all humanity. The more limited parallel during this period wherein Ahasverus symbolized only the Jewish race has already been discussed,

¹Arno Holz, "Ich schwamm auf purpurner Galeere," Buch der Zeit, Phantasia No. 10 (München and Leipzig, 1905), 228.

but it is helpful in pointing out the value of the Wandering Jew as a symbol of miserable, suffering people everywhere. If he could represent a minority in this role, it is easily comprehensible that he could come to represent the vast majorities--suffering was not confined to minority groups. Ahasverus easily spanned the gulf separating the minority group from the masses and became the symbol of mankind. This role became Ahasverus' most important symbolic function in the nineteenth century:

" . . . der Ahasver-Stoff symbolisierte im 19. Jahrhundert den Menschen an sich, . . ."¹

Julius Mosen (1803-1867) helped to bridge the gap between the two worlds of Ahasverus' Weltschmerz symbolism, referred to above, in his poem, "Ahasver" (1838). Composing this epic, which is filled with worldly pessimism, Mosen recognized the existing value of Ahasverus as a symbol of the Jews. But he also recognized its potential as a symbol of all humanity. His intention to portray Ahasverus as the symbol of mankind is stated early in the poem:

Und Ahasver seh' ich da vor mir schreiten;
Und durch Jerusalem und durch die Welt
Den einsam DÜsteren will ich begleiten.

Den Zorn der Menschheit auf dem Angesichte,
Das Herz trägt er gerüttelt voll von Hass,
Trotz gegen Gott bis hin zum Weltgerichte.

Zur Zeit nur eines Volkes Todeschmerzen,
Zur Zeit die Noth nur einer einz'gen Stadt,
Trägt er den Weltschmerz bald in seinem Herzen.²

¹Elizabeth Frenzel, Stoff-, Motiv- und Symbolforschung, 2nd. ed. (Stuttgart, 1963), p. 45.

²Julius Mosen, "Ahasver," Sämtliche Werke, II (Oldenburg, 1863), 150-151.

Even though the sorrows in his heart are those of only one city and one people, soon he will carry the sorrows of all the world in his heart.

Mosen's poem is different from earlier accounts of the legend inasmuch as Ahasverus is no longer a passive observer of historical events nor a mere romantic sufferer. He is an active participant in this poem. He portrays strength and courage and becomes a fitting representative of humanity.

Ahasverus is the father of two motherless children. The Roman governor offers to take the children to Rome for a proper education. Ahasverus questions Christ as to what he should do, but Christ ignores his questions and prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem. The Jew sinks into despair and rage, killing his children as a young Roman comes to lead them away to Rome. The Crucifixion and Ahasverus' curse follow. However, the archangel Michael tells him that his children will prepare the way to salvation for him on three future occasions.

During the first era of Ahasverus' wandering, he is not yet an old man. He has been married a second time, but this wife has died leaving him two children. The Romans enter to sack and destroy Jerusalem. The Jew's daughter has been converted to Christianity by a friend. As Jerusalem burns, Ahasverus throws his children into the flames in defiance of God because of their belief in Christ.

During the second era of Ahasverus' wandering he again is the father of two children. He is called by the emperor to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. Tradition demands the sacrifice of two children belonging to the oldest person present. Ahasverus has left his children in the wilderness, thereby thinking them safe. But the children appear

at the temple site in the last instant and Ahasverus screams in agony of defeat. The Saviour accepts the children and destroys the temple with lightening.

In the third era, Ahasverus storms Jerusalem in the name of Mohammed and promises death to any and all who worship at the Holy Sepulchre. His children, who were brought by angels, remain kneeling in reverence as other pilgrims flee. Ahasverus attempts to shield them from the arrows with his indestructible body, but they are killed. Ahasverus' third chance of redemption is past. He has not accepted Christ as the Saviour. He has not been able to intervene on behalf of his children. And moreover, he is still not ready to accept the Christian concept of salvation. Ahasverus finally realizes he must represent all of mankind in his struggle against an unjust God:

Von ihm und seiner Gnade losgekettet
 Beginn' ich jetzt mit ihm den langen Kampf,
 Bis ich von ihm die Menschheit hab' errettet!

Wen er verfolgt, den soll er ewig merken;
 Ansag' ihm auf immerdar den Krieg!
 Lossag' ich mich von ihm und seinen Werken

Im Namen aller Erdencreaturen
 Vom Menschenkind bis auf den Stein hinab,
 Wo kaum aufzucken noch des Lebens Spuren;

Im Namen aller Kräfte und Gewalten
 Bis zum Gesetz hinab, nach welchem sie
 Zum Leben und zum Dasein sich gestalten;

Im Namen aller Seufzer, aller Schmerzen,
 Vergoss'ner Thränen und vergoss'nen Blut's,
 Gebroch'ner Seelen und zertret'ner Herzen!

So will ich ewig leben, ewig wandern,
 Bei euch, ihr Menschenbrüder, immerdar
 Von einer Zeit hinüber zu der andern;

Bis endlich dennoch sich die Nacht gelichtet,
 Bis Er uns reicht die brüderliche Hand
 Oder in seinem Stolze uns vernichtet.¹

Christ appears to Ahasverus and encourages him in his struggle. He assures him that the Final Judgement will decide what is right and wrong.

Christ is no longer judge over Ahasverus. The Jew need not strive to please Him any longer. He has his own mission to fulfill--a mission in the name of persecuted and down-trodden humanity everywhere. Ahasverus must attempt to insure that all mankind is treated justly. Mosen prepared the way for Ahasverus to become more than a passive character in literature. He was to become the leader in a revolt against oppression. He had been devoted to only one people too long; in the future his devotion was to belong to the whole of mankind. Mosen changed Ahasverus' curse into an opportunity. Ahasverus accepts his new role as the representative of humanity.

Karl Simrock (1802-1876) contributed a poem, "Der ewige Jude" (1844), to the ever-increasing list of Wandering Jew literature. He too expressed the relatively new symbolic significance of the Jew as representative of humanity.

Simrock's verse is written as if seen through the eyes of the Wandering Jew. The Jew acknowledges that one day he will be allowed to rest, because the peoples of the world will become unified through the teachings of Christ. Even though religiously oriented, this poem conceives of all mankind as brothers. The Resurrection of Christ will bring all of this about:

¹Mosen, pp. 317-318.

Ein hoher Klang durchzieht die Welt,
 Wie da Du auferstanden,
 Der Völker Scheide bricht und fällt:
 Du lösest uns von Banden;
 Die Bruderstämme darf nicht mehr
 Der alte Hass beschleichen,
 Da Völker über Land und Meer
 Die Hand zum Bund sich reichen.

 Bald zieh ich nicht mehr fort und fort,
 Mit Wolken und mit Winden;
 An jedem Ort werd ich Dein Wort
 Und Deine Lehre finden;
 Nur eine Heerde wird es sein
 Von einem Pol zum andern:
 Versenkt in Deiner Glorie Schein
 Vergess ich dann mein Wandern.¹

As soon as all the world accepts Christ, the Wandering Jew, and hence all of humanity, will find rest and fulfillment.

The symbolic potential of the Wandering Jew as representative of all humanity is obvious. When Ahasverus arrived through Weltschmerz as a symbol of the oppressed masses, the doorway was opened for a great variety of symbolic inferences involving the "oppressed" people of the world. Many nineteenth century authors recognized this artistic potential in Ahasverus. Although he remained symbolic of all humanity, a variety of interpretations began to appear in literary form.

A mid-nineteenth century French novel utilized the Wandering Jew theme, and though originally written in French, it became the most popular treatment of the legend in the nineteenth century. It was translated into German and went through more than fifteen printings within four years.² The author of this novel, Le juif errant (1844-45), was Eugène

¹Karl Simrock, "Der ewige Jude," Musenalmanach 1832, ed. Amadeus Wendt, III (Leipzig, 1832), 237-238.

²Albert Soergel, Ahasver-Dichtungen seit Goethe (Leipzig, 1905), p. 89.

Sue (1804-1857), a well-known author of adventure stories. The novel originally appeared in serial form in a French newspaper.

Even though the title of the novel is The Wandering Jew (translated into English in 1845), it is nevertheless misleading. The Wandering Jew is not even one of the major characters. He functions more as a transitory figure in several segments of the story. The story itself is concerned with the efforts of the order of the Society of Jesus to obtain a fortune intended as inheritance for the members of the Rennepont family. The Jesuits are led by the ruthless Rodin in their efforts to prevent the Renneponts from receiving their rightful inheritance. The heirs are supposed to assemble at a certain house in Paris on a particular day. Rodin attempts to frustrate such a meeting. After a series of adventures and misadventures, including a devastating epidemic of cholera and robberies, murder, and other forms of violence, most of the Rennepont heirs are dead. The evil Rodin has succeeded in preventing the few survivors from meeting at the appointed hour. Just as he prepares to gather up the fortune in the name of the Jesuits, he dies from poisoning. The fortune is destroyed by a fire set by the caretaker of the house in Paris--who turns out to be none other than the Wandering Jew.

The Wandering Jew has a companion in Sue's novel: Herodias, the Wandering Jewess.¹ They appear together in the prologue--Ahasverus on

¹The Wandering Jew is described in several works as having a female companion, usually portrayed as his wife. The Volksbuch was the first publication to ascribe a wife and family to the Wanderer. However, he never saw them again after he was cursed by Christ. Authors later invented female versions of the eternal Wanderer to accompany him, or simply to wander by themselves about the earth. Sue's Wandering Jewess is

the Siberian side of the Bering Straits, and Herodias on the American side. The Wandering Jew's Weltschmerz is apparent, but the Jewess seems to indicate that eventual salvation is within their reach:

And now, in the midst of the transparent and azure veil which rests upon the two lands, two human figures are visible.

On the Siberian cape, a man, upon his knees, stretches forth his arms towards America, with an expression of measureless despair.

On the American promontory, a young and beautiful woman responds to the despairing gesture of the man, by pointing to heaven.

For a few seconds, these two magnified figures gleam pale and mistlike in the last rays of the aurora borealis. But the fog gradually thickens, and all disappears in darkness.¹

Ahasverus and the Jewess continue to make brief appearances throughout the novel. They are obviously unsuccessful in helping the Rennepont heirs; they are able to postpone misfortune, but cannot prevent it.

The Wandering Jew appears again for a time when the cholera epidemic reaches Paris. It is the Jew, in fact, who carries the dreaded disease with him wherever he goes. Before entering the city, the Jew soliloquizes concerning the workingmen of the world. He claims they were all cursed at the same time Christ cursed him in Jerusalem:

My brethren--mine--the workman of Jerusalem, the artisan accursed of the Lord, who, in my person, condemned the whole race of artisans, ever

not Ahasverus' wife; she is his sister. Herodias, the Jewess' namesake, is the wife of King Herod and the mother of Salome, who danced for the king and demanded the head of John the Baptist as her reward in the New Testament. See Anderson, The Legend of the Wandering Jew (Providence, 1965), pp. 414-416.

¹Eugène Sue, The Wandering Jew, trans. unnamed (London, 1845), p. 2.

suffering, ever disinherited, ever in slavery, toiling on like me without rest or pause, without recompense or hope, till men, women, and children, the young and the old, all die beneath the same iron yoke--that murderous yoke, which others take in their turn, and which is thus borne from age to age on the submissive and bruised shoulders of the people.¹

The Jew represents the oppressed working classes. He does not want to bring death in the form of disease to them, but a voice sends him onward into the city.

The Wandering Jew is present at the end when Rodin comes to collect his ill-gotten fortune. But just as Rodin begins to rejoice, fire breaks out and destroys the money. The Jew at least prevents him from gaining the wealth of the Renneponsts. Rodin then falls to the floor in the agonies of death, poisoned by the hand of the Wandering Jew.

At the end of the novel, the now aged and decrepit Wandering Jew and Jewess meet in the seclusion of a mountain valley:

The Lord punished, in you and your posterity, the artisan rendered wicked by misfortune and injustice. He said to you: 'Go on! without truce or rest--and your labor shall be vain--and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to the end of your eternal course!' --And so, for centuries, men without pity have said to the artisan: 'Work! work! work! without truce or rest--and your labour shall be fruitful for all others, but sterile for yourself--and every evening, throwing yourself on the hard ground, you shall be no nearer to happiness and repose; and your wages shall only suffice to keep you alive in pain, privation, and misery!'--

. . . in redeeming you, heaven will redeem the artisan, execrated and feared by those who have laid on him the iron yoke . . . Yes, I tell you; in us will be rescued both the woman and the slave of these modern ages. The trial has been hard, brother; it has lasted for eighteen centuries; but it will last no longer.

. . . Henceforth, I will only shed tears of pride and glory for those of my race, who have died the martyrs of humanity, sacrificed by humanity's eternal enemies--for the true ancestors of the sacrilegious wretches,

¹Sue, p. 381.

who blaspheme the name of Jesus by giving it to their Company, were the false Scribes and Pharisees, whom the Saviour cursed!--Yes! glory to the descendants of my family, to have been the last martyrs offered up by the accomplices of all slavery and all despotism, the pitiless enemies of those, who wish to think, and not to suffer in silence--of those, that would feign enjoy, as children of heaven, the gifts which the Creator has bestowed upon all the human family. Yes, the day approaches--the end of the reign of our modern Pharisees--the false priests, who lend their sacrilegious aid to the merciless egotism of the strong against the weak, by daring to maintain, in the face of the exhaustless treasures of the creation, that God has made man for tears, and sorrow, and suffering--the false priests, who are the agents of all hopeless humiliation, the brow of every creature. No, no! let man lift his head proudly! God made him to be noble and intelligent, free and happy.¹

The dying words of the two Wanderers indicate that their sympathies have always been with workers of the world. They have been the champions of the oppressed--the Jew for the man, and the Jewess for the woman.

Sue's novel was written as anti-Jesuit propaganda. This theme dominated the action throughout, but the Wandering Jew and Jewess symbolized the working classes--oppressed humanity. Social improvement was needed in the mid-nineteenth century. Sue and the Wandering Jew helped to publicize the existing conditions which faced the working man.

Ahasverus assumes the role of the champion of the oppressed in a poem entitled, "Skizzen zu Ahasver" (1896-1897), by Gustav Renner. The Jew is aware of only one need, and that is to bring relief and comfort to the oppressed:

Bis es in einem einzigen Schrei erklingt,
 Der wie ein Messer durch die Seele dringt,
 Millionenstimmig hallt es durch die Luft,
 Millionenstimmig von der Häuser Schlucht,
 Ein Echo, das sich tausendfältig bricht,
 Ein heißer Schrei nach Brot und Glück und Licht,
 Ein heisses Wünschen und ein drohend Mahnen,

¹Sue, p. 551.

Als wollt' es sich den Weg zum Himmel bahnen
 Und dort durchbrechen seine blaue Wand,
 Die wie ein Grustgewölbe sie umspannt.
 Ahas stürzt weiter, ohne noch zu fühlen,
 Er fühlt nur diesen Schrei im Herzen wühlen,
 Den Schrei, der, eine Welt von Not und Schmach,
 Aus Millionen Menschenherzen brach,
 Aus Herzen, die im Staube längst verloren,
 Aus Herzen, die die Zeit noch nicht geboren.--¹

Ahasverus is eager to help mankind, including men yet unborn. He wants to help rid humanity of all of its wants and sorrows.

Robert Hamerling (1830-1889) wrote an epic poem in 1866 entitled "Ahasver in Rom." This poem was later reworked into a five-act drama. The Wandering Jew represents humanity in this poem also, but with a new slant on the interpretation. The main character of the drama is Nero; Ahasverus plays a secondary role. The action is set in Rome during the reign of Nero. The excesses of the decadent society are well described in scenes of Bacchanalian orgies. Nero is the vilest of the revelers. He represents the mortal wish to live. Ahasverus, on the other hand, symbolizes the death wish, but in the sense that humanity seeks to destroy the evil in society in expectation of a more ideal situation. In other words, Ahasverus seeks the death of the despot Nero in order to prepare the way for a more benevolent ruler. Destruction of evil precipitates the emergence of good.

In the third act of the drama, Ahasverus has set Rome on fire and bids Nero to throw himself into the flames. Nero wishes to know in whose name Ahasverus speaks:

¹Gustav Renner, "Skizzen zu 'Ahasver'," Gedichte (Berlin, 1904), pp. 116-117.

Nero

In wessen Namen sprichst du so zu mir?

Ahasver

Im Namen Jener, die sich wie ein Phönix
Aus ewigen Verwandlungen erhebt,
Die du verachtest, und an der du frevelst
In keckem, stolzem Uebermuth, im Namen
Der Menschheit, Nero, spreche ich zu dir!
Ich bin ihr Mund, ich bin ihr duldend Herz,
Du aber bist ihr Henkerwerkzeug nur,
Das sie bei Seite wirft! Ja, Über dich
Ruf' ich den Fluch und weihe der Vernichtung
Dein todverfallnes Haupt! Doch nicht dem Tode,
Der sanft das Menschenkind, das lebensmüde,
Zur Ruhe bettet--solchen Tod verdienst
Du nicht--du sollst ihn bei lebend'gen Gliedern
Empfinden, sollst im Herzen, das noch pocht,
Die Würmer der Verwesung nagend spüren!
Du sollst, noch lebend eine Zeitenspanne,
Den Fluch der inneren Unseligkeit
Hinschleppen, bis in öder Seele schauernd
Du selbst begreifst, dass du das höchste Ziel,
Das du durch Weltvernichtung wollt'st erreichen,
Nur noch erreichen magst durch Selbstvernichtung!¹

Ahasverus speaks in the name of humanity. Nero and his decadent society must be eliminated to prepare the way for a better world.

Ahasverus personifies the skepticism of mankind in a poem by Frank Wedekind (1864-1913) entitled, "Sommer 1898" (1912). Wedekind was influenced by a trip of the German Kaiser, William II, to Palestine.² Ahasverus thinks he should travel to his ancient homeland and thereby possibly receive favors from the emperor. He thinks that if Christ had been heralded in the newspapers and advertised in advance as is the Kaiser, he surely would not have insulted Him and been cursed to wander.³

¹Robert Hamerling, Ahasver in Rom, reworked for the stage by Julius Horst (Hamburg, 1900), p. 96.

²Zirus, Der ewige Jude, p. 130.

³Frank Wedekind, "Sommer 1898," Gesammelte Werke, I (München and Leipzig, 1912), 54-55.

Nevertheless, the Jew is not sure what consequences his curse implies in these modern times. To whom should he pay his respects, to the Kaiser or to Christ? If one pays homage to the wrong master, or is concerned more for one's own welfare, someone more powerful yet sneaks up and curses one from behind. The Jew is beset by indecision:

Ja, wir Menschen stolpern blind
 Durch des Lebens Enge.
 Oft ist leer wie Schall und Wind
 Grösstes Festgepränge.
 Irrt man ehrfurchtsvollen Blicke,
 Ehr' und Macht zu suchen,
 Kommt der Mäch'ge hinterrücks,
 Einen zu verfluchen!--

Es wechseln nicht nur an der Börse die Grössen!
 Nichts bleibt uns, inmitten von Puffen und Stössen,
 Als ununterbrochen das Haupt zu entblössen.¹

Ahasverus is skeptical of all developments. Humanity is blind. He feels the only safe course for mankind to steer is down the middle--if they are willing to believe only what they can see. Wedekind uses Ahasverus to represent the futile position of the common man in a modern world.

The nineteenth century was the most productive period ever for the Legend of the Wandering Jew. The influences of the seventeenth century Volksbuch continued to inspire the literary treatments of the legend. The Jew's misery in this world and his death-wish made him an appropriate vehicle for the romantic notion of Weltschmerz. During years of industrial and social revolution, it was natural for the despairing Ahasverus to come to represent the oppressed masses, i.e. the working classes. Thus, the most popular literary accounts of the legend

¹Wedekind, p. 55.

to date took form in the mid-nineteenth century and were still distinctive at the turn of the century.

CHAPTER VII

CONTEMPORARY USEFULNESS OF THE LEGEND AS A LITERARY THEME

The Modern Ahasverus

As was indicated previously, the Legend of the Wandering Jew achieved its greatest popularity in literature in the nineteenth century. The influences of the German Volksbuch of 1602 continued to be felt in the legend's artistic development. No matter what type of work appeared in which the Wandering Jew had a significant role, much of the detail surrounding him came from the Volksbuch. The artistic development of the legend has relied on four major areas of interest, which are already found in the Volksbuch. These four specific influences have been described and developed in the foregoing chapters. Religion, history, Jewishness, and human suffering have been the greatest contributors to the development of the artistic theme. All ensuing treatments of the Legend of the Wandering Jew are either directly or indirectly influenced by one or more of these salient characteristics of the legend.

The nineteenth century authors, in their extensive use of the Wandering Jew theme, exhausted the sources of artistic merit inherent in the original legend. It became increasingly difficult for an author to create an original work centering around the Wandering Jew--unless the detail in the legend were drastically altered. Therefore, the volume of Wandering Jew literature declined markedly after the turn of the century. Ahasverus suddenly lost the universal popularity which accompanied him from the seventeenth century to the twentieth.

There have been many twentieth century treatments of the legend,

however. It is my belief that these contemporary works continue to be limited to the four general spheres of influence already described. In other words, contemporary works dealing with the Legend of the Wandering Jew are capable of classification under headings of religion, history, Jewishness, or human suffering. To illustrate this modern limitation, I have selected four modern Wandering Jew accounts, indicating to which group of definition each belongs.

Pär Lagerkvist, a talented Swedish author, wrote a short novel in which the Wandering Jew plays a major role. Ahasuerus död (1960), or, in translation, The Death of Ahasuerus (1962), is an interesting treatment of the legend which falls into the religion category.

Tobias and Diana, a repentant sinner and his mistress, await the end of a storm in a small inn. They are on their way to the Holy Land, Tobias believing that such a pilgrimage will assure his redemption. The Wandering Jew enters the inn. While the storm rages, Tobias tells the story of his conversion after a life of crime. Eventually the storm abates and the three continue on their way together. They arrive upon the scene of a robbery and murder, and, as Tobias inspects the carnage, someone shoots an arrow at him. Diana sees the arrow and throws herself between it and Tobias. She dies happy in her knowledge that she has saved Tobias and that he loves her for it.

The Jew and Tobias reach the seaport from whence the pilgrim ship is to sail, but the ship has already departed for the Holy Land. Tobias arranges passage on a small vessel manned by a crew of ruffians, paying them all the money he has to take him to the Holy Land. They take his money and sail off into the darkness, whispering and laughing. The Wandering Jew observes the proceedings.

The Jew is suddenly taken sick. He is bedded in a monastery. Dying, the Jew defies God in his realization of an essential divinity which is situated within, and yet beyond all things, forever unattainable by man--even by Christ when He was mortal. Every man embodies an element of the divine within himself, but he is incapable of attaining this divinity. However, it is precisely man's inability to achieve the divine that compels him to continually seek it:

Yes, god is what divides us from the divine. Hinders us from drinking at the spring itself. To god I do not kneel--no, I never will. But I would gladly lie down at the spring to drink from it--to quench my thirst, my burning thirst for what I cannot conceive of, but which I know exists. At the spring I would gladly kneel.

And perhaps that is what I'm doing now. Now that the battle is over at last and I may die. Now that at last I have won my peace.

I don't know what it hides in its dark depths. If I did I might well be terrified. But I desire to drink from it. It may be those very depths that can assuage my burning thirst.¹

It is apparent that this novel is religiously inclined. Tobias and Diana symbolize the sinfulness of mankind, which, no matter how evil, persists in discerning a glimmer of hope for redemption. Ahasverus represents man's attempt to find spiritual fulfillment. It is not something tangibly expressed in religious tradition, rather it is intangible and beyond complete comprehension. It is divine, but not in the sense that God is divine. One must strive for it within one's self. The recognition of this inherent divinity, which will lead to personal salvation, allowed Ahasverus to finally find rest.

George Sylvester Viereck and Paul Eldridge wrote a novel entitled

¹Pär Lagerkvist, The Death of Ahasuerus, trans. Naomi Walford (London, 1962), p. 87.

My First Two Thousand Years (1928), which purports to be an autobiography by the Wandering Jew. However, the novel is an erotic tale, describing the amorous adventures of the Wandering Jew and Jewess. The Jewess makes her original appearance as Salome, the daughter of Herodias. But throughout the novel she is continually reincarnated as different lovers of the Wandering Jew. The novel builds its plot, as weak as it may be, around the historical potentialities of the Wandering Jew.

"Ahasuerus," in Mirrors and Windows (1958), identifies the ancient Jew with the Jewish race. The poem is a very well written treatment of the Wandering Jew by Howard Nemerov. The Jew has suffered throughout history, and the grim look of suffering on his face is no longer a mask, but has become hardened into the features of a race. The differences between the Jewish people and Christ may never be settled because of the eternal suffering to which the Jews have been subjected:

But yet I come no closer. He will ask:
Do your feet bleed after the weary task?
Come, now I give you leave to drop the mask.
Was ever grief like mine?

The mask, my Lord, has hardened to my face,
I say, and formed the features of a race
Uncertain if it cares to bear Thy grace.
Was ever grief like mine?

.
Shall I have spirit, when He tells me then,
Give over, Child, and be as other men,
To spit at Him? Eternally? Again?
Was ever grief like mine?¹

That the Wandering Jew can still be recognized as a symbol of humanity is evident in the poem, "The Wandering Jew," by Irving Feldman.

¹Howard Nemerov, "Ahasuerus," Mirrors and Windows (Chicago, 1958), p. 49.

The poem appears in five parts in the collection, Works and Days (1961). The Wandering Jew is clearly identified with humanity in the fifth part. In order to survive in this world, one has to "scratch":

If I must stay where I am, my God,
How will I survive on this patch?
God said, Scratch

And if I'm so sick of this world
Its mere thought makes me retch?
God said, Scretch

.
O, where are You? Your voice like
A record worn, only one word I catch! . . .
Scratch, God said, Scratch¹

Conclusion

There is little indication that the Legend of the Wandering Jew will completely disappear as a literary theme. Since the mysterious Wanderer appeared in the church in Hamburg in 1542 and subsequently in literature in 1602, he has not been neglected. He appears constantly in poems, plays, novels, and folktales. His value as a well-developed and variously interpreted literary theme has been clearly established. The literary versatility of the legend is admirable. " . . . ein unscheinbares Motiv und doch so fesselnd in seinen Konsequenzen, ein dürftiges stoffliches Interesse und doch so gewaltige weltentlegener Schauplatz und doch die völkerbewegend Idee des nimmer ruhenden Fortschritts!"²

The Legend of the Wandering Jew has been popular in literature

¹Irving Feldman, "The Wandering Jew," Works and Days (Boston and Toronto, 1961), pp. 100-101.

²Johann Probst, Die Sage vom ewigen Juden in der neueren deutschen Literatur (Leipzig, 1905), p. 163.

because of its uncanny ability to adapt itself to any situation in any generation. The eternal existence of the Jew provides the legend with timelessness, a characteristic which allows each generation to recreate the Wandering Jew in its own image. The Wandering Jew can, therefore, mean any and all things to mankind in every age. Nevertheless, the legend is limited in its usefulness as a literary theme in the manner discussed above.

Works containing the Wandering Jew vary widely in content, purpose, and interpretation. But they all have at least two things in common; they agree that the Jew is cursed with eternal life and they all contain an element of longing: longing for death, longing for peace, or longing for an ideal solution to a vexing situation.

The literary treatments of the legend are readily classified in four categories according to thematic development: the religious treatments in which the Wandering Jew may be a witness for Christ, or symbolic of the liberating principle of death, or symbolic of the forgiveness of sin through repentance; the historical treatments in which the Wanderer functions primarily as an eye-witness to world events; the treatments in which Ahasverus exhibits the author's anti-Semitic inclination, or in which he symbolizes the whole of the Jewish race; and the treatments of human suffering in which the Jew exhibits the romantic concept of Weltschmerz, or in which he symbolizes the suffering of humanity in general.

Works centering around the Wandering Jew are becoming more and more infrequent. The death of Ahasverus in Lagerkvist's Ahasuerus död may well be symbolic of the Wanderer's fate in contemporary literature. Because traditional treatments of the legend tend to confine the Jew's usefulness to the four categories described here, it is no wonder that

his appearances in literature are less frequent. When he does appear, details of the original legend tend to be distorted in order to give his appearance some originality. However, because of the legend's adaptability as a literary theme, it is unlikely that the Wandering Jew will be entirely forgotten.

The suffering of mankind, like the suffering of Ahasverus, is eternal. Unless some improbable shift of human events eliminates sorrow, the resurrection of Ahasverus as a popular literary theme may occur at any moment.

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APPENDIX

THE GERMAN VOLKSBUCH OF 1602

Title Page:

Kurtze beschreibung und Erzehlung / von einem Juden / mit Namen Ahasverus: Welcher bey der Creutzigung Christi selbst Persönlich ge- / wesen / auch das Crucifige ober Christum hab helffen schreyen / unnd umb Barrabam bitten / hab auch nach der Creutzigung Christi nimmer gen Jerusalem können kommen / auch sein Weib und Kinder nimmer gesehen: unnd seit hero im Leben geblieben / und vor etlich Jahren gen Hamburg kommen / auch Anno 1599. Im December zu Dantzic ankommen.

Es hatt auch Paulus von Eitzen / der H. Schrifft D. und Bischoff von Schleswig / beneben dem Rector der Schulen zu Hamburg / mit ihm conferiert: von den Orientalischen Landen / nach Christi Zeit was gegeben / das sie sich nicht genug darüber verwundern können.

Matthei am 16.

Warlich ich sage euch / es stehen allhie etlich / die werden den Todt nit schmecken / bisz das sie desz Menschen Sohn kommen sehen in sein Reich.

Gedruckt zu Leyden / bey Christoff

Creutzer. Anno 1602.

Text:

Weil dieser zeit bey uns allhie nichts neues zuschrieben / will ich euch etwas altes / welches doch bey vielen mit verwunderung / für etwas neues gehalten wirdt: erzelen / welches sich volgender gestalt verhältet.

ES hat Paulus von Eitzen / der H. Schrifft Doctor: und Bischoff zu Schleswig / dann er von J. F. Gn: Hertzog Adolff von Holstein zum Bischoff erwöhlet und bestättigt ist / so nit allein bey menniglichen in ansehen und glaubwürdig / sondern auch durch sein in truck gegeben Schrifften ein berühmter Mann ist / mir und andern Studiosis / etlich mahl erzelet / das als er in seiner Jugendt zu Wittenberg studiert / und einmal im Winter in Anno 1542. zu seinen Eltern gen Hamburg gereiset: hab er den nechsten Sonntag hernacher in der Kirchen / under der Predigt einen Mann welcher ein sehr lange Person / mit einem langen über die Achsel abhängenden Harr / gewesen / gegen der Cantzel über auff blossen seinen barfüßig stehn sehen: welcher mit solcher Andacht die Predigt gehört / das man an ihm einige bewegung nicht spüren können: aussenthalb wann der Name Jesus Christus genenet worden / hab er sich geneigt / an seine Brust geschlagen / und sehr tieff geseufftzt: und hab kein andere Kleidung angehabt / in demselbigen harten Winter / als ein par Hosen / die an den Füßen durch gewesen / ein Rock bisz an die Knie: unnd darüber ein Mantel / bisz auff die Füß / sonst sey er Alters halben anzusehen gewesen / als ein Mann von 50. Jahren ungefährlich / als er nun sich wegen seiner grossen gestalt / Kleidung und Geberden über ihm verwundert: hat er nach ihm / wer er were / und was sein gelegenheit seye / geforschet / da hatt man ihn berichtet: Das derselbige sich nun den Winter über etliche Wochen lang daselbst auffgehalten: und von sich

auszugeben das er ein geborner Jud von Jerusalem / mit seinem Namen Ahas-
 verus und seines Handtwercks ein Schuhmacher / auch bey der Creutzigung
 Christi selbs Persönlich gewesen / und seit hero im leben geblieben: und
 durch viel lender gereiset sein / wie er dann zu bestetigung dessen viel
 umbstündt / so sich mit CHRISTO nach dem er gefangen / und für Pilatum
 geführt / darnach für Heroden / auch bisz er entlich gecreuziget worden
 / zugetragen / von dem / weder die Evangelisten noch Historischreiber
 meldung thun: Deszgleichen auch von allerhandt geschichten und Regimenten
 verenderungen / so in den Orientalischen Landen nach Christi Leiden / in
 etlich 100. Jahren hernacher sich zugetragen: Wie auch von den Aposteln /
 wa jeder belebt / gelehrt / unnd endtlich gelitten / vollkommen guten
 bericht zugeben wuste. Als nun Paulus von Eitzen solches gehöret / hat
 er sich noch mehr darab verwundert / und gelegenheit gesucht / selbst
 mit jm zureden. Da er nun dasselbig entlich erlanget / hab jhme der Jud
 solches alles mit umbstenden erzelet: das er namlich zur zeit Christi
 zu Jerusalem wonhafftig / auch jhme dem Herrn Christo / welchen er für
 ein Ketzer und Verführer gehalten / weil er anders nicht gewusst / auch
 vor den hohen Priestern und Schrifftgelehrten / denen er zugethan gewes-
 en / anders nit gelhrnet gehabt / gram gewesen / und hab derwegen all-
 zeit sein bestes gethan / damit dieser Verführer / wie er daflr gehalten /
 möchte vertilget werden: Hab auch endtlich jn fangen / für die Hohen-
 priester und Pilatum führen / anklagen / uber in das Crucifige schreyen /
 und umb Barrabam bitten / auch so weit bringen helffen / bisz er zum Tod
 verurtheilt worden. Da nun der Sententz gesprochen gewesen / hab er als-
 bald nach seinem Hausz / da der Herr Christus hatt fürvher sollen geführt
 werden / zu geeylet / unnd es seinem Hauszgesindt angesagt / damit sie
 jhn auch sehen möchten / da hab er selbst sein kleines kind off seinen
 Arm genommen; mit jme für die Thür gestanden / jn den Herrn sehen zu-
 lassen. Als nun der Herr Christus under seinem Creutz herzu geführt word-
 en / hab er sich an sein Hausz etwas angelehnet: da sey er zu merer sein-
 es Eyfers anzeigung herzu gelauffen: und mit scheltworten sich von dannen
 wegk zu packen / und hinaus / da er hingehört / zu verfügen / for ge-
 wisen. Da hatt jhn Christus starck angesehen / und jhn auff die meinung
 ungefährlich angeredt ICH WILL STEHEN UND RUHEN / DU ABER SOLL GEHEN:
 Als bald hab er sein Kind nidergesetzt / unnd im Hausz nicht bleiben
 können: Sondern mit nach gefolget und zugesehen / wie er ist hingerichtet
 worden. Nach dem solches alles vollendet worden / sey jm unmöglich ge-
 wesen widerumm in die Statt Jerusalem zu gehn / wie er auch nit mer dar-
 ein kommen: Sein Weib / Kind und Gesind / nit mehr gesehen sondern also
 bald for in frembde / unnd also eins nach dem andern bis daher durch-
 zogen habe / unn ob er wol uber etlich 100. Jahr widerumb ins Land kom-
 men / hab er es doch also verwust unnd Jerusalem verstört gefunden / das
 er es nit mehr gekandt habe. Was nun Gott mit jme für habe / das er so
 lang in disem elenden Leben herumb führe / ob er jn vielleicht bisz am
 Jüngsten Tag / als ein lebendigen zeugen des Leyden Christ zu mehrer uber-
 zeigung der Gottlosen und ungleubigen also erhalten wolle / sey jm un-
 wissent / seines theils möchte leiden / das jn Gott ausz diesem Jamerthal
 Zu ruhe abforderte. Auff dises / habe er Paulus von Eitzen / bey neben
 dem Rector der Schulen zu Hamburg / welcher ein gelexter und in Historijs
 erfahrner Mann gewesen / mit jme von allerhand geschichten / so sich in
 den Orientalischen Landen / auch Christi zeiten hero verlossen / confer-
 iert: Da hab er jnen alle umbstündt und gnugsamen berich davon gegenen /

das sie sich darüber nicht gnugsam verwundern können. In seinem leben sey er still und eingezogen gewesen / nit geredt / als wann man jn gefragt / wann man jn zu Gast geladen sey / ershienen / doch wenig gessen und getruncken / da man jm Gelt verehret / hab er nit uber 2. schilling genommen / doch also bald wider under die Armen getheilt / mit vermelden / er bedürffe es nicht / Gott werde jn wol versorgen. So hab man jn die zeit uber / weil er zu Hamburg gewesen / nie sehen lachen: In welches Landt er kommen / desselbigen sprach hat er geredt / wie er dann damahl die Sächsische sprach als wol geredt / als wann er eingeborner Sachs were. Es sein auch / wie D. Eitz berichtet damahln vil Leut ausz vielen Landen / und weit gelegenen Orten / jn zusehen unnd zu hören gen Hamburg kommen: auch vilerley Judicia uber jm ergangen: der mehrer theil aber habe dafür gehalten / er habe ein fliegenden Geist bey sich / der jm solche ding offenbare: Welches aber er nit dafür gehalten / weil er nit allein Gottes wort gern gehört und davon geredt / auch alwegen mit grosser andacht und grossem seufftzen den Namen Gottes genennt: Sondern auch das er kein Fluchen dulden können / dann wann er iemandt bey Gottes leyden und wunden Fluchen höret / er darüber erzittert und mit grimmigen eyffer getrawet. Du Elender Mensch / du Elende Creatur / soltu den Namen Gottes und seine Marter also miszbrauchen / Ja soltestu gesehen unnd gehört haben / wie sawr dem Herrn Christ seine Wunden und Leyden / dein und menet wegen worden were / wie ichs gesehen / dur würdest dir ehe leidt thun lassen / dann dasz du also seinen Namen nennest. Unnd dieses hat Ehren gemelter HErr Paulus von Eitzen mir unn andern mündlich doch mit vil mehr unn weitem umständen erzelet / welches ich gleichwol seithero von etlichen altenburgern / alhie zu Schleszwig / die auch zum theil denselbigen damaln gesehen / unnd mit jhme geredt / affirmieren gehört.

DIsz erschienen 75. Jahr seyndt Secretarius Christoph Ehringer unn M. Jacobus / welch unser Gnadiger Herr / Herzog Adoff zu Holstein ungefährlich vor fünff viertheil Jaren als Legaten an König in Hispanien abgefertiget / wegen der bezalung / so sein Königlich W: Ihr Fürstlichen Gnaden: und dem Kriegsvolck / mit dem sie in Anno 1572. dem Duc de Alba in das Niderland gezogen / noch schuldig verblieben: umb befürderungen angehalten. Widerumb zu Hausz kommen und alhie zu Schleswig angelangt / die berichten das sie zu Malduit obgedachten man in aller gestalt / mit Kleider / geberden / und Alter noch zu sehen / angetroffen / mit jhme geredt unnd eben / wie der abgemelt neben andern Leuten von im verstanden haben / und hab er sein gut Spanisch geredt.

Was nun von dieser Mans Person zuhalten: davon steht jedem sein Judicium frey: Die werck Gottes seind wunderbarlich und unerforschlich / und werden je lenger je mehr ding / die biszhero verborgen gewesen / Nun mehr gegen dem zunahenden Jüngsten Tag und ende der Welt offenbaret / wol dem der es in rechtem verstandt auffnimbt und er kennete unnd sich daran nicht Ergert.

Datum Schleszwig den 9. Junij 1564.

Dieser Mann oder Jud / soll so dicke Fuszsolen haben / das mans gemessen / zweyer Zwerch Finger dich gewesen / gleich wie ein horn so hart wegen seines langes gehen unnd Reysen / er soll auch Anno 1599. zu Dantzic in December gesehen worden sein:

ENDE

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